

HOMELY SCENES

FROM

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PAINTERS.

HOMELY SCENES FROM GREAT PAINTERS.



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FROM

GREAT PAINTERS.

BY

GODFREY WORDSWORTH TURNER.

Illustrated by Twenty-four Full-page Photographs

BY THE WOODBURY PROCESS.



CASSELL, PETTER, AND GALPIN,

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PREFACE.



“BELLS AND POMEGRANATES”—the name capriciously given by a very great poet to a certain book of his, and more capriciously withdrawn from it—was a title that suggested the association of pleasant chiming sounds, familiar voices in the air, with fruit that sustains and invigorates while it also gives delight. Melody and refreshing juices; the odour of the flower and the substance of the honeycomb; sweetness to the sense and nourishment to the soul—what else than such happy union of diverse goodness could be meant by the mystic title?

No mysticism in the name under which this book goes forth to seek its fortune demands explanation or apology. Really, unless we find for our four-and-twenty “Homely Scenes” a poetical analogy based, or delicately balanced rather, on their identity of numbers with the four-and-twenty fiddlers all of a row, and the four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie, there is nothing to symbolise that combination of music and food which we would yet venture to assert for the following pages.

Home is (not to speak it paradoxically) a wide word; and to be “at home everywhere” is a social ambition of some magnitude. May we yet venture to indulge it? The hope, at all events, that our book is destined to make its way into far distant lands—to be a guest, perhaps, in many a backwoods-man’s lonely log-hut, where a well-worn

classic or so, memorable of Isis or Cam, gives token that the owner has sat at good men's feasts, and been where bells have knolled to church, and learned the strong enforcement of gentleness, which, after all, is an idea not irreconcilable with that of "roughing it" in the bush—this hope, we say, encourages us in the belief that a certain catholicity which has been our chief aim may secure such homely welcome as will be the best reward of earnest toil.

Such welcome we desire none the less at other hands. Home is home, be it never so—grand. Wealth is not of necessity sordid, unkindly, and dull. The grace of life, it is true, cannot be bought; but it may be bountifully thrown into a bargain, and is not by any means denied to every sumptuous purchase. The very first essay in our book is a plea for the homely grace of a palace; the very first picture is a "Homely Scene" in the midst of princely splendour.

The author would not, were this the time and place for enlarging on the subject, disguise opinions artistically adverse to the pictorial functions which photographers often assume. But he believes that the Woodbury type has a legitimate and wholesome mission; that, properly used, it will spread the knowledge of art, and the consequent love of art, where, for ages to come, the knowledge without such aid could not penetrate and the love could not grow.

The poem by the late Mr. Alexander Smith, "The Night before the Wedding," has been introduced in the paper entitled "The Village Rose" by the kind sanction of Messrs. Macmillan and Co.



HOMELY SCENES FROM GREAT PAINTERS.

THE BEAUTIFUL DUCHESS.

No home of a "governing-class" family in the days when George the Third was king—those days which were at once so magnificent and so mean, so voluptuous and so rustic : fine gentlemen indulging coarser habits of speech than would now be tolerated in a convocation of coalheavers ; and fine ladies submitting, day after day, with no apparent sense of the degradation, to the presence of their deboshed lords and masters, reeling from the bacchanal orgie which was the polite consequence of every invitation to dinner—would have been thought complete without a portrait or two by Sir Joshua Reynolds. One of the most charming, one of the most gracefully domestic of that delightful limner's records of the life of his day, is that which we have placed at the front of our "Homely Scenes." Paraphrasing Steele's cordially delicate compliment to a woman as amiable as Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, one might say that not to love these beauties on canvas, not to admire the genius which has fixed them there, is to miss a liberal education. The mere name of Steele seems to set us in the right train for admiring the works of the gentle Sir Joshua, and especially his portraits of women and children. We cannot so surely hit upon the true estimate of that painter's Divine gift as by bringing ourselves *en rapport* with such a nature as that of the essayist of whom Thackeray has well said, " His breast seems to warm and his eyes to kindle when he meets with a good and beautiful woman, and it is with his heart as well as with his hat that he salutes her. About children, and all that relates to home, he is not less

tender, and more than once speaks in apology of what he calls his softness." Few authors now-a-days need apologise for any fault of that kind; few are guilty of the weakness which gave Steele's works their worth and his style its charm. It is not the error of the age. Few painters are so simple as Reynolds; few pictures are full of those unforced, unconscious, and unfailing effects which proceeded from his pencil as naturally as music from the birds.

"About children, and all that relates to home," about the quiet beauty, affection, playfulness, obedience, self-sacrifice—"softness," in a word—which the knowing and the clever hold in sublime contempt, we are made to think by the sight of this charming maternal and domestic portrait-picture. Duchess, or poor curate's wife, or fair *bourgeoise*—what matters the station, the mere social rank, of this loving and lovely lady? Well, perhaps it matters a little. All the more forcibly does the domestic character of the subject impress itself upon us for knowledge of the facts that surround the history of this "queen of *ton*" with much gaiety and brilliance of colour. We do not forget that Sir Joshua's pet in childhood—he painted her as a promising infant first—was, in the bloom of her youth, "the most brilliant of the gay throng who danced and played the nights away at the Ladies' Club, masqueraded at the Pantheon, and promenaded at Ranelagh." This is the account of her which is fairly summed up in the "Life of Sir Joshua Reynolds," by the late Mr. Leslie and Mr. Tom Taylor; and Horace Walpole, who did not allow that she was beautiful, and who denied the truth of Sir Joshua's likenesses, said, at the time of her marriage, "Her youth, figure, glowing good-nature, sense, lively modesty, and modest familiarity, make her a phenomenon."

She was a phenomenon, indeed. Gibbon declared her to be "made for something better than a duchess." She produced and was the cause of much good verse, and some true poetry, in her time. "A vital liberality of sentiment" is attributed by Leigh Hunt to her poem on the "Passage of Mount St. Gothard"—that same poem which, awaking the enthusiasm of Coleridge, drew from him the lines beginning—

"Splendour's fondly fostered child;"

and pointed with the oft-recurring burden—

"O lady, nursed in pomp and pleasure,
Whence learn'd you that heroic measure?"

Sincere, no doubt, was the “liberality” of “Splendour’s fondly fostered child.” It is hard to suspect the truth and earnestness of beauty, youth, and intellect, combined with high animal spirits; and the nature of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, was notably impulsive. The stanza which excited Coleridge’s rapturous admiration was the following :—

“And hail the chapel ! hail the platform wild !
Where Tell directed the avenging dart,
With well-strung arm that first preserv’d his child,
Then wing’d the arrow to the tyrant’s heart.”

There is abundance of nerve and animation in this apostrophe ; but perhaps a finer outbreak—fresher and more fervent, though less heroic, and in a curious way reminding the reader of the “almost classical” Gray’s familiar Elegy—is in that stanza which is not so often cited—

“Yet let not these rude paths be coldly traced ;
Let not these wilds with listless steps be trod.
Here fragrance scorns not to perfume the waste ;
Here charity uplifts the mind to God.”

The generosity of “opinion” which is eloquent in the ode of Coleridge may be sampled in these twelve lines of antithesis to the main proposition of the lady’s noble sympathies. The whole is too long to quote :—

“Light as a dream your days their circlet ran,
From all that teaches brotherhood to man
Far, far removed ! from want, from hope, from fear !
Enchanting music lulled your infant ear ;
Obeisance, praises, soothed your infant heart :
Emblazonments and old ancestral crests,
With many a bright obtrusive form of art,
Detained your eye from nature ; stately vests,
That veiling strove to deck your charms divine,
Rich viands and the pleasurable wine,
Were yours unearned by toil : nor could you see
The unenjoying toiler’s misery.”

Without at all wresting or straining ideas to our present purpose—the illustration of graceful homeliness—it seems fit to observe that this very theme of Tell is at least as *homely* as it is patriotic in sentiment. It is not the literary fashion to quote Mr. Carlyle's early work, the "Life of Schiller"—perhaps it is not even fair to do so, saving with proper note of the fact that the book in question was reprinted by the author only to save it from being reprinted *for* him; but there is one passage, relating to the story of William Tell dramatised by Schiller, which is so much to our present purpose that we cannot pass it by. Tell's reasons for destroying Gessler, Mr. Carlyle argued, in his youthful book, were not drawn from jurisconsults and writers on morality, but from the everlasting instincts of nature. The Austrian Vogt must die; because, if not, the wife and children of Tell will be slain or cast into a dungeon. So, too, his honest Switzer companions are not speculative patriots; they never mention the Social Contract or the Rights of Man. "They are honest people, driven by oppression to assert their privileges; and they go to work like men in earnest, bent on the dispatch of business, not on the display of sentiment."

This, the reader may say, is going a little apart from our immediate subject; but then, we reply, if historical duchesses will be brilliant, as well as beautiful—will be humane and poetical, as well as domestic—how can we choose but follow whithersoever they lead?

The family picture we are now looking at contains the *third* likeness of the distinguished lady painted by Sir Joshua. The first is one of his most delightful child-portraits. The second represents her a beautiful young woman; and the picture is curious in point of dress. The fair Georgiana at that time countenanced the fashion of wearing high plumes as a head-dress. The feathers painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds are lofty enough to provoke the ridicule, perhaps, of a modern observer; though it is said that the judicious artist somewhat pruned the pompous exuberance when fixing the face and the feathers on his canvas. We have already seen that the duchess, besides writing verses herself, was the cause of verse in others. A *jeu d'esprit* from the pen of Frederick, Earl of Carlisle, Lord Byron's relative and victim (in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers"), purports to answer "all the absurd and illiberal aspersions cast on the fashionable feathers by churlish old women, ridiculous prudes, and brutish censors." The lines are good enough to

be now and then remembered; and, as this seems a fitting occasion, here they are :—

“ Wit is a feather ; this we all admit :
 But sure each feather in your cap is wit !
 ’Tis the best flight of genius to improve
 The smiles of beauty and the kiss of love.
 Like beams around the sun your feathers shine,
 And raise the splendour of your charms divine.
 Such plumes the worth of mighty conquerers show,
 For who can conquer hearts as well as you ?
 When on your head I see the fluttering things,
 I think that Love is there and claps his wings.
 Feathers helped Jove to fan his amorous flame ;
 Cupid had feathers ; angels wear the same ;
 Since, then, from heav’n its origin we trace,
 Preserve the fashion—it becomes your Grace.”

She was a bride when the picture was painted and the rhymes were written. Sir Joshua painted her the third time as a young mother, when the world was still at her feet, and poets, wits, and witlings strove who should honour himself most in honouring her.

A man must have a very placid and even temper—“the same all the year round,” as Boswell said of Sir Joshua’s—before he could sketch or imagine pictures so charming as this, and scores beside this; he must also have a very delicate and enjoying perception of all fine shades of humour. That likeness of Dr. Johnson prefixed to the celebrated “Life” harmonises with many a delightful page in the book; and there are no pages there which are more truly delightful than those containing the name of Reynolds. Who can forget the amiability of the great painter’s apologies for defects in the nature or the manner of his friend? One knows not whether to be grave or to smile at the ingenuity of this charitable plea for Johnson—“He was fond of discrimination, which he could not show without pointing out the bad as well as the good in every character; and as his friends were those whose characters he knew best, they afforded him the best opportunity for showing the acuteness of his judgment.” The best things about Johnson were given to Boswell by Reynolds. Nothing more exquisite in its way was ever

painted in words than the lightly-touched jotting of the journey into Devonshire. Johnson was a stranger to Plymouth, but seeing that a new neighbourhood had grown up round the Dock, he quickly inferred that the two places, like the tubs of oysters offered for sale at different prices a dozen, "hated each other." The doctor declared himself against the Dockers. "I am a Plymouth man," said he, gallantly, for his brief abode certainly was in Plymouth; "I stand by the established town—I hate a docker." It was Sir Joshua Reynolds, too, if we remember accurately, who reported Johnson's dictum about "Ossian;" to wit, that a man might write such stuff for ever, if he would *abandon* his mind to it. These are the little, truthful, humorous touches which you see in all the portraits painted by the good Sir Joshua, whose irresistible qualities were like those of an elegant woman. In speaking of him here, and in speaking of his favourite sitter, her Grace of the Plume, we find that the word "charming" has repeated itself rather frequently. We shall not amend the careless iteration. The word "pleasing," Lord Chesterfield said, always put him in mind of Lady Hervey; the word "charming" may serve to bring before us more vividly still the "beautiful Duchess of Devonshire."

It should not detract from our interest in the Woodbury type which stands so worthily at the head of this series, to know that the engraving which it represents, line for line, with undeviating exactness, was taken, not from Sir Joshua's original picture, but from a copy. That copy, which is in the Queen's collection at Windsor Castle, is the work of a great painter. The task of reproducing the labour of Reynolds was at first assigned, by King George the Fourth, to Sir Thomas Lawrence; but he, not unfortunately, as we may all agree, turned over the royal command to Etty. A copy by Etty from Sir Joshua Reynolds! Why, there is a double pricelessness in such a treasure! It is as though one should have a poem of Shelley's in the handwriting of Clough or Morris. Nor is the value of Etty's duplicate a merely sentimental value. The great modern colourist, and his only pupil "Dagger" Leigh, who had many pupils—of whom it may suffice to name such accomplished artists of our day as Marks, Poynter, Leighton, and "Sick Child" Clark—did not disdain to copy fine examples of posthumous art, with as patient a fidelity as ever distinguished a promising student at the Royal Academy or South Kensington. It is the habit of all great minds, indeed, to con-

tinue studying; and no painter can tell when he is at the height of his powers, so as to need nothing more of knowledge that can be gained from patient investigation of the works of others.

The baby crowing on the knee of her Grace is the grandmother—is it not a funny thing to think?—of the present Duke of Sutherland; the “Prince of Dukes,” as the shrewd essayist in miniature, who acts as master of the ceremonies to Mr. Pellegrini’s puppet-people, calls that kind and careless nobleman. She was the mother, that is to say, of a duchess as beautiful and as widely celebrated and beloved as Horry Walpole’s “invincible queen of *ton*.”

Of all the enormous advantages which an ancestral home, and its influences in early childhood and youth, should surely afford, there is perhaps none so inestimable as familiar access to a noble gallery of old pictures. One would suppose that its effect upon a high nature, in which all the essential attributes of gentility—do not scorn the word for its misuse by many tongues—are inborn, must be a perfect education of itself. Such, at least, is our reflection whenever we survey that one pictorial exhibition of the London season, to which all people may go with an anticipatory sense of pleasure that has a calm and reverent certainty about it. No other exhibition can be implied in this remark than that of the works of “ancient masters and deceased British artists,” which has been lately transferred from the gallery of the British Institution in Pall Mall, to the more commodious rooms of the Royal Academy at New Burlington House. We may at times have our quarrels, little and great, with those who are set in authority over artistic affairs; but there is a period when our censures are suspended, when our laughter and our sarcasm are suppressed. It is when we are bidden to inspect the annual collection of art-treasures, gathered from the richest private galleries in the United Kingdom, which simply means in all the world. There are permanent exhibitions of which the nation may justly be proud; but scarcely can we claim for these a pre-eminence in the list of European public galleries. For our yearly Metropolitan display of pictures owned by English gentlemen there is, however, no parallel in any other country. To Mr. Holford, to Sir Harry Verney, to Mr. Walter, to the Earl of Warwick, to Mr. Wynn Ellis, to General Gomm, to Earl Stanhope, and to other gentlemen opulent in the only pardonably covetable wealth, we have in long-past years had periodical feelings of personal gratitude.

Let us recall a typical assembly of that kind—a congress of art in which this picture by a “deceased British artist,” this masterpiece of Sir Joshua Reynolds, may well find a place of honour. Look round, with the best use of that eighth sense, the “mind’s eye.” Murillo! “The Assumption of the Virgin,” being here, must be imagined as holding a chief position on the walls. It would be going over well-trodden ground were we to observe that the Virgin is a Spanish peasant, as all Murillo’s holy personages are Spanish peasants, male or female, young or old. We will merely say, therefore, that the face is beautiful, the long dark hair an exquisite addition of natural loveliness, the bright blue scarf an appropriately celestial adornment, and the iridescent confusion of cherubim a completion of the picture. Vandyck—ha! What shall we pounce upon as best exemplifying this princely painter’s art? The Abbé Scaglia and Princess of St. Croix will make a good specimen pair, on the principle of harmonious contrast. The Abbé is a grand piece of portraiture, recalling to the life an astute old priest in his dark robes, with his long lean hands, taper fingers, and thoughtful Italian face. Then we come upon a Claude, which, with all due respect to Mr. Ruskin, we take the liberty of admiring with the utmost heartiness. Not that we are led into rapture by technical qualities that would tickle a picture-dealer. On the contrary, where he would praise the mellow tone of the work we might be inclined to regret its dinginess, the result of that long action of time which never improved a picture, whatever influence it may have on a pipe of port. It is in spite of, not owing to, old age that the colours of this picture glow, and the lights are truly luminous.

In the Cuyp next it, excellence of truthful art asserts itself against the impairing influence of more than two centuries. The water is not of a dead level of colour, but is shattered and broken by many accidents of sunshine or shadow, yet sober withal, even where the gay flags of the sturdy Dutch-built vessels are mirrored. How wonderfully the tints have stood! Will it be thus with the tints of all pictures that are painted now-a-days? The old painters knew their pigments chemically. Each artist was his own colourman. The producing of a picture was a man’s business, *ab ovo*. Gerard Dow would let no hand come near his colours save that hand which was afterwards to place them on canvas or oaken panel. He was so careful as to grind each pigment on a crystal slab, and he would, without doubt, have been horrified at the notion of using unknown mixtures presented to him

in collapsible tubes. The modern painter may get a much larger assortment of brilliant colours, prepared ready to his hand, but he cannot possibly know that their brilliancy is permanent. Let us hope it may prove so, and that the hues enriched by newly-invented means will not be treacherous.

Is there, then, nothing but what is admirable and worshipful in these ancient masters? Was the good old humdrum traditional enthusiasm touching their wondrous merits quite right, and undeserving the corrective tests of the "Oxford graduate's" critical retorts and crucibles? We will answer such questions as well as we can by reference to certain objects on our visionary walls. A work of Domenichino comes handy. The "Magdalene" forsooth! A comely person enough, we grant, whose rich golden hair flows gracefully over the blue robe, over the crimson vest, over the warm glossy flesh. But, *cui bono*? There is nothing in her eyes to indicate sorrow, nothing in her face to show a broken and a contrite spirit. She is a model posed—not a Mary Penitent. And Guido, too, is here, with his sentimentality and flowing outlines, that flow by rule. Saint? Truly a fine head, but not distinguished by a very holy expression. One might see it in a barrack-yard, or on 'Change, or in an orchestra, or anywhere, in short, without thinking that it would look better in a pulpit. Of Caracci's landscape, with the figures depicting "The Baptism," is it irreverent to say that so devoid of all solemnity is the group, so altogether meaningless and common-place, that it might be the action of shampooing and not of baptism which is represented? But enough of that boldness of detraction which is now no longer bold—which is, in point of fact, as much the "correct thing" as was once a blind abasement before every dusky old canvas!

Rembrandt is glorious; and who shall say he had not a perfect right to choose a top-light to paint by, if he liked it best? Martin Looten, dead and turned to clay, is a real, living, breathing personage at this moment in our gallery; for Martin Looten had the great privilege of being painted by the miller's son—of being painted, not in the flesh alone, but in the whole Looten humanity. Rare privilege, not even to be surpassed in an age of cheap and good photographs! To all Rembrandt's portraits the same observations will apply; at any rate, we intend them to do so. Vastly superior, if you will, are those gentlemanlike presentments of the great Vandyck. Sir Edward Verney, standard-bearer to King Charles the First, stands before us. Not a great man, Sir Edward; not a very notable

personage, perhaps ; but a "swell," to use the modern word which, to modern ears, is most expressive of a personal fact. Substitute short hair and a beard for long ringlets and a smooth skin, and this might be one of the worn Indian campaigners of to-day.

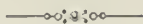
Again passing to Rembrandt, we do not find our genuine love of his qualities diminished by any lingering taste or love of the fine company we have just left. We have no word for the portrait of 'Madame Lypsius' but "magnificent." The kindly old face looks out with a brisk sympathy. Very, very scanty is the hair ; but the eye is still bright, the brain still clear, the heart still warm.

Backhuysen against Canaletto for real poetry of scene, life, and character ! The second of these two artists may be supposed, on the theory of experience, to have known how to paint Venice. He painted it often enough ! But a tavern-waiter goes on opening dozens of bottles of soda-water every day, all the years of his working life, and he knows no better how to do it at the last than at the first, blundering in his performance when practice has made him perfectly grey. Certainly, if the "sort of vulgar Venice" be intended by Canaletto—if this be meant for Venice without sunshine, her gondoliers without song, her waters without a reflection—if, indeed, it be intended for Amsterdam, there may possibly be a kind of dull duck's-egg green resemblance. Look at that neighbouring picture by Backhuysen, "A Seaport with Shipping." See the bustle on the quay ; mark the traders, the loungers, the sailors ; observe how the Dutch boats, the galliots, and larger vessels seem to rise and fall with the waves ; and is there not poetry which "Vathek" Beckford could not have denied, even to a Dutchman, in the distant horizon ? Vigour of thought and hand are shown in every sea-shore picture by this artist. Sombre and cold some of them, indeed the generality of them, may be ; but the fine broad treatment stands for glow, and the monotony of cloud-shadow on the waves is not dull. Breughel's intensely zoological picture of "Noah's Ark"—you see we must have all kinds of old masters, to get the requisite amount of variety in our typical collection—has no bound to its fund of entertainment. We could spend a happy week with it in a country-house. It is quaint and comic, but very grave notwithstanding. There are absurd tigers toadying each other ; utterly impossible bulls flanking incredible elephants ; and a giraffe, for whose single accommodation the ark would not be a bit too big. "A Village

Shop," by Mieris, is of course the *right* shop for marvellous accuracy of onions, of nuts, of spinning-wheel, of broom, of fish—of everything, in fact, down to human figures.

Well, and having lingered so long among the old Italian and Flemish masters, can we find room for no word about the Gainsboroughs, the Wilsons, the Cromes, the Constables, the Morlands, the Wilkies, the Nasmyths, the Romneys—the Sir Joshuas? Nay, the word is spoken in that proposition, a page or two back, concerning the picture-galleries of historic English families. A high veracity, a delicate and unswerving honour, thoughtfulness for others, all the qualities which are as necessary as the accomplishments of learning to perfect the character of any man eligible to lead or to represent his fellows, should justify so happy a fortune as to be born and reared among these legacies of the past. Another parting glance at our gallery! It does not lack, be sure, a boyish portrait or two by Sir Joshua. Ah! here is the young human being of the male sex, with the long hair of the period—emphatically a Boy, and one evidently designed by nature to grow up a gentleman. How little the true type changes!

THE KEEPER'S DAUGHTER.



“BUT not kissed your keeper’s daughter!” To divers other offences did Falstaff confess, or, at least, did he allow judgment to go by default in the matter, but in this he was blameless. Perhaps Justice Shallow’s keeper’s daughter, if any such damsel existed, was not of an inviting presence; perhaps after having beaten Justice Shallow’s men, killed Justice Shallow’s deer, and broken open Justice Shallow’s lodge, Sir John, with all his amorous propensity, was in no mood for dalliance. At all events, we will not suspect him of a gratuitous and useless falsehood, nor question his honesty in so trifling a particular. Keepers’ daughters have, as a class, had their full share in the romance of ancestral days; and many are the ballads and love-tales wherein a maiden of such low degree is the heroine, and a young earl, baron, or heir to lordly estate the hero. We are seldom told of a *mésalliance* so interesting in these prudent and prosy times. Lord Fitznoodle and Sir Carnaby Jenks, of the Blues, are not the wisest of young men who go down to the moors for a week or two’s grouse-shooting, but we may set our minds at ease on any possible point of mortal difference between them, the object in dispute being a young lady whose principal accomplishments are the cleaning of gun-barrels and the cooking of messes for spaniels, pointers, and setters.

Certainly the pretty face which we have before us, in a thoroughly natural and homely scene, would be the fairest of all excuses for chivalrous folly in Sir Carnaby or his lordship. An anxious lady-mother might wish the temptation out of her darling’s way. If we venture to repeat a little anecdote which is somewhat to the purpose, we hope, nay, are sure, there is no need to caution the British aristocracy against any “moral,” deducible from the tale. Once on a time, then, a young officer in a crack regiment, a godson of a very great general and man of the world, did go down to the moors, on a fortnight’s leave, and did, in that short time—perhaps the grouse were scarce—manage to make himself very



ridiculous by positively "falling in love"—that was the phrase, not as then entirely obsolete—with the keeper's daughter. Consequences, at first trivial, became more and more serious. At first there was the overstayed leave, and a bit of a mess at head-quarters. Then there was a long correspondence, of the kind which is usually found so productive of laughter when it is read by a man in a wig and gown, perhaps only because it is read by a man in a wig and gown. Then came the discovery, and affecting tableau of maternal anguish and filial confusion: a homely scene over which we drop the convenient curtain.

Mr. Frith, who has painted our keeper's daughter, and Mr. Ansdell, who has painted the dogs at their dinner, have left us little room to doubt the locality of their homely scene. It is, at any rate, north of the Tweed, and we judge it to be a lowland picture. The winding burn, of which we can just catch a glimpse through the open door of the bothy—there are bothies elsewhere than in the highlands—would be suggested by the lassie's bare feet. And the winding burn would suggest, even if the keeper's daughter herself and the field dogs failed to do so, a neighbouring country as full of promise for the gun as for the rod. The pointer whose nose is in the dish, while the girl's head is turned and her forefinger raised to chide the impatience of the other dogs, is an excellent type of that staunch breed of hounds whence he has sprung. Colonel Thornton's Dash, the pointer that was sold for one hundred and sixty pounds' worth of burgundy and champagne, a hogshead of claret, a valuable gun, and another pointer, with the proviso that if by accident Dash should ever be disabled, he was to be returned to the colonel at the price of fifty pounds, might have stood for the portrait.

When we are looking at dogs, or at pictures of dogs, or at anything that interests us in or out of a frame, we are not generally averse from hearing good stories on the subject, always providing they are not too long. De Quincey has very hard words for the "generation of anecdotes;" has the hardest and shortest of all words for them, indeed, though he himself anecdoted as much as if such a sentence as "You're another" were a sound without meaning. There is ample authority, at all events, for the first of our pointer-ana. Colonel Thornton, already named, had his famous Pluto and Juno painted by Gilpin, and they stood for an hour and a quarter in the attitude of pointing; while, in fact, the artist stood in the attitude of painting. Our second anecdote is borrowed (without the least

intention of returning it) from Mr. Jesse. He had a friend who "went out shooting with a gentleman celebrated for his breed (of pointers). They took the field with eight of these dogs. If one pointed all the rest backed steadily, and if a partridge was shot they all dropped to the charge." To be perfect at his down-charge, and to resist the natural impulse to "run in," is a duty which the pointer learns more quickly than the setter, or any of the spaniel kind; and, by-the-by, the truthfulness of Mr. Jesse, impugned by "Boz" in one of the early chapters of "Pickwick," was curiously avenged by a slip of the successful young author later on in the book. So far as we know, this slip was never exposed in any published critique, and it was, with marvellous good-nature, passed in silence by the sporting journals and magazines, which gave long extracts from the chapter in question, and even quoted with mute approval the very passage containing the mistake. Most of our readers will recollect the whimsical account of the shooting party at which Mr. Pickwick assisted in a wheelbarrow. At the first discharge, when a brace of birds fall to Mr. Wardle's two barrels, Mr. Winkle asks, in a state of great excitement, "Where are they, where are they?" To which the old gentleman replies, "Where are they!—Why, here they are, to be sure," indicating the partridges which the dogs have laid at his feet. "No, no," cries Mr. Winkle; "I mean, where are the others?" "Far enough off, by this time," rejoins Mr. Wardle, *coolly reloading his gun*. The gun, as any sportsman will see, should have been reloaded before the game was fetched. If this had been a true description of the scene, Mr. Wardle's dogs would have justly suffered the inevitable penalty of a sound flogging at the hands of the keeper, for neglecting their down-charge and running in. The author's blunder is fatal, for it destroys the humour of the incident by rendering the incident itself impossible. The description is altogether untrue.

Perhaps the entertaining story told about a pointer by Captain Brown is quite as apocryphal as anything in the adventures of the Pickwick Club; but then it is natural and characteristic—in a word, *vraisemblable*, if not absolutely *vrai*. "A gentleman, having requested the loan of a dog from a friend, was informed by him that the dog would behave very well as long as he could kill his birds; but if he frequently missed, then the dog would run home and leave him. The pointer was sent, and the following day was fixed for trial; but,

unfortunately, his new master happened to be a remarkably bad shot. Bird after bird rose, and was fired at, but still pursued its flight untouched, till at last the dog became careless, and often missed his game. As if willing, however, to give one chance more, he made a dead stop at a fern bush, with his nose pointed downward, his fore-foot bent, and the tail straight and steady. In this position he remained firm till the sportsman was close to him, with both barrels cocked; then moving steadily forward for a few paces, he at last stood still near a bunch of heather, the tail expressing the anxiety of his mind by moving regularly backwards and forwards. At last, out sprang a fine old blackcock. Bang! bang! went both barrels; but the bird escaped unhurt. The patience of the dog was now quite exhausted, and, instead of dropping to the charge, he turned boldly round, placed his tail between his legs, gave one howl, long and loud, and set off as fast as he could to his own home."

May it not have been the mere instinct of self-preservation, aided by the sagacity which told the dog his human companion was dangerous, that sent Captain Brown's friend's dog trotting homeward with all speed? That dogs, as well as horses, know the men they have to deal with, ponder their qualities, sympathise with their courage, and speculate on their weaknesses, can scarcely be doubted. Still, the description, in the foregoing anecdote, of the pointer's disgust, and his contemptuous retirement from partnership with a man who steadily missed his game, so often as it rose before him, does seem a *little* over-coloured.

The setter, though put to the same work, or nearly the same, as the pointer, is a dog of quite another race; correctly speaking, he is a spaniel, the other being a hound. Our English pointers have undoubtedly sprung from a mixture of the Spanish variety and the foxhound; and it is as certain that the setter and the old original land-spaniel are one and the same breed. The Irish setter is especially free from suspicion of houndish blood to mar the purity of his spaniel descent. This is the king of setters—finer in the muzzle, narrower in the head, faster, a great deal, than the square-skulled, heavy-chapped English setter, that looks very much as if he had an original dash of Spanish pointer in him. A very good authority says: "The setter is by some sportsmen preferred to the pointer; and where water is to be got at occasionally during a day's shooting, there can be no doubt of his superiority. He cannot, however, work

without a drink as long as the pointer can, although, if he can obtain a sufficient supply, he can work still longer than that dog. In disposition, the setter is more affectionate, and more attached to his master individually, than the pointer is. He requires more training than the latter dog, but that training must be of a very mild and gentle description, lest the dog be blinked or spirit-broken. The setter will always work best in cold and wet weather; the pointer cannot, from his short hair, which makes him very susceptible of cold; but will stand out a day's shooting much better than the setter in very warm weather. However, the setter is decidedly the best dog for general use."

The setter painted by Mr. Ansdell in this picture is unmistakably English, but showing the best points in common with the Irish setter; and being high on his legs, and having a tail well fringed and fan-like, he is somewhat of kin to the Scotch variety. No doubt, the painter had before him, for a model, some noted and noteworthy dog; and he himself is not the man to misrepresent or, as the art-cant goes, "idealise" his subject.

THE KITTENS.

(See Frontispiece.)



IT was the opinion of Hamlet,^o Prince of Denmark, forcibly and floridly interpreted by Mr. Montague Tigg, that Hercules might lay about him with his club in every possible direction, but he could not prevent the cats from making an intolerable row on the roofs of the houses, or the dogs from getting shot if they ran unmuzzled about the streets during the prevalence of warm weather. But that which physical force, represented by the club and amazing muscular development of Hercules, is utterly unable to perform, may be in some measure brought about by moral suasion and a liberal dietary. Meanwhile, these four-footed friends of ours are entitled to the same charitable and reasonable allowances which we do not withhold from our “even Christians,” in whom it is customary for us to endure those distasteful traits which cannot be cured. Cats and dogs are naturally noisy, and prone to turbulent behaviour. The nocturnal wail of the domestic tabby is more terribly discordant than the wildest screech or howl that wakes the mountain fastness and disturbs the forest depths. And though the noise of a pack of hounds in full cry be the sweetest of music to some people, there are yet others who will boldly speak their minds, and say of the sound as Cowper said of it, to wit, that it is music of that peculiar kind

“For which, alas ! my destiny severe,
Though ears she gave me two, gave me no ear.”

We cannot, however, deny that the dog is a more universally popular animal than poor puss. The invincible antipathy to cats which is well known to reside in the very blood of many human beings, so as to make them intuitively aware of the creature's presence, though shut up in a cupboard or hidden under a couch, has no parallel in the feelings of our race with regard to dogs. We may apprehend danger from their ferocity, but we have no mysterious repugnance

towards them apart from rational dread. And, once assured that the animal is harmless, everybody likes a dog, and would rather have one for a companion, maybe, than the best fellow in his club. A pitman in the Black Country stays at home if his dog is ill; "for," says he, "a chap looks like a fool without a clawg." No poodle, no terrier, no mongrel, whelp, or hound, or cur of low degree was ever yet known to bore—by reading you his own verses, for example—or to borrow money, or to backbite, or to worm himself into a fellow's confidence and then betray him. A dog will love you without self-interest, will obey you without grudge or grumbling, will follow you to the grave and wear the true mourning of a dejected spirit. Your life is his life; your joy is his joy; and if you are sorrowful, he will hang down his ears and droop his tail, or only wag this appendage timidly, in the poor hope of cheering you a little with his humble, noble, generous hypocrisy of cheerfulness. He is the only sincere dependent; the only honest flatterer.

We cannot say this, or half this, or anything in the smallest particular resembling this, for the best cat in any of the shows which promise to become a national institution. But the worst and most demoralised cat ever "hung on Monday for killing of a mouse on Sunday" was a kitten once; and kittenhood is a thing of beauty and a joy until it takes to the tiles and caterwauling. And even feline maturity, which is often made to bear more sins, especially in the matter of household breakages, than should rightly be laid upon its shoulders, has an amiable side to its character. There is no truth in the assertion that cats, like the deformed and monstrous persons of whom Bacon wrote, are commonly devoid of natural affection. They have their likings and dislikings, and are as fond of horses, for instance, as horses are fond of them. The stableman recognises this peculiar sign as one of the best certificates to character which any horse can possess. Every racer has his favourite cat. The famous horse Mortemer sleeps with one sleeping between his ears, and would fret and "go off his feed" if the dainty, purring softness were denied him. The still more famous Godolphin Arabian was also warmly attached to the cat that lived with him in his stable. It is said that the smaller of the two friends pined when his noble companion died; and the story is carried somewhat close to the confines of the incredible, inasmuch as the cat is recorded to have stretched itself out on the grave of the horse, and

to have then and there expired of a broken heart. What is enough for our modern matter-of-fact argument is, that a good understanding does subsist between these two dissimilar beings. It is one of the most beautiful of the many beautiful characteristics in the nature of the horse; and the merit is surely reflected in the very diverse nature of the cat.

That there are fewer kindly stories of cats than of dogs, and very many more unkindly and hideous stories, cannot be questioned. "'Tis true, 'tis pity, and pity 'tis 'tis true." The horrible suggestion in one of the final chapters of "The House with the Seven Gables," the passage, that is to say, which associates very grimly the still picture of the man who has died in a fit, and whose body reclines in an arm-chair, a little spot of blood staining the purity of his frilled cambric shirt-front—which associates this picture, we say, with the stealthily-creeping cat outside the open window, is enough to make us shudder whenever the graceful animal rubs himself fondly against our feet. The light-hearted poisoner, Wainewright—whose arsenical doings have been, in our time of literary adventure, scented as a rich quarry, and "hunted down" to the taste and intelligence of a large and eager field of readers—is said to have lavished all his tenderness, when in prison, on one of these creatures.

There is a very ghastly story about a cat in the brain-sick pages of Edgar Poe. A man of wantonly cruel inclinations, a morbid madman almost, tortures a cat by plucking out one of its eyes, and then, if we remember rightly, kills it. He is haunted by a precisely similar cat, with one eye, and does not get rid of his unpleasant follower till after he has killed his wife with a hatchet and plastered her up in a convenient hole in a wall. But the sudden and unintelligible disappearance of the brute he has grown familiar with causes him great uneasiness; as well it may, for when his house is searched for the body of the missing woman, and when, vainly triumphant in the fancied security of his neat job of plastering, he ventures to rap the wall in presence of the police and the neighbours, an unearthly shriek is heard behind the partition. Of course this is immediately pulled down, and the cat is discovered sitting on the head of the corpse, and glaring a quite supererogatory accusation, with its one eye, at the murderer. Was ever fiction so outrageously grotesque, so "marvellously distempered"?

The luxurious love of comfort which brings the feline nature into harmony

with human civilisation, and which is a perpetual marvel to naturalists and to those persons who consider that all the signs of original wildness in a cat remain little if at all changed by domestication, though in the dog an endless system of modifying qualities seems exactly proportioned to his various ways of life, has principally helped in establishing intimate relations between pussy and ourselves. We cannot help liking an animal that likes cream, and cleanliness, and velvet cushions, even though such elegant partialities be accompanied by an appetite for mice and a fearful delight in torturing such small deer. After all, such inconsistencies are not limited to catly conduct. If a crack pigeon-shot were to send his cheque for ten guineas (drawn on Coutts, let us suppose, by way of humorous point) to the Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, with a polite request to be entered on the list of annual subscribers, do you think Mr. — would send back the money, with a stern and stinging rebuke and an indignant refusal to have anything to do with one who

“ — links his pleasure or his pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels”?

You are very much mistaken if you imagine anything of the kind.

That love of comfort which we have already noticed as an attribute of the cat, has, with the attachment to place rather than person, been sometimes instanced as proof of insincerity in puss's show of affection. This is unfair. Our own loves are all made up of associations. Change the conditions of any sentiment, and the sentiment itself is destroyed. The girl in Goethe's novel hit this common but little recognised truth when, being asked whether she did not wish her lover had not a club-foot, she replied, No; for that if his foot were not a club-foot he would be somebody else, and how could she love him then? Hence a nice question seems to spring, touching the discretion of him who, forming an honourable attachment for one below him in station and culture, thinks to mend matters by sending her to school. Can he be quite sure that the defects he is anxious to remove have not some subtle affinity with his first feelings towards his destined wife? Remove those defects, and she is another woman, as Wilhelm Meister without his orthopædic infirmity would have been another man. Let us, however, return to our tabbies.

One of the charmingly speculative essays in Leigh Hunt's "London Journal" is entitled "The Cat by the Fire." He takes a real, concrete specimen, and sketches her with masterly touches; and then, as is his wont, he sits down before his picture, gossips kindly and carelessly about it, and leads us with him on a pleasant train of reflection and reminiscence. Here is the passage:—

"She is a sprightly cat, hardly past her youth; so happening to move the fringe of the rug a little with our foot, she darts out her paw, and begins plucking it and inquiring into the matter, as if it were a challenge to play, or something lively enough to be eaten. What a graceful action of that foot of hers, between delicacy and petulance!—combining something of a thrust-out, a beat, and a scratch. There seems even a little bit of fear in it, as if just enough to provoke her courage, and give her the excitement of a sense of hazard. We remember being much amused with seeing a kitten manifestly making a series of experiments upon the patience of its mother—trying how far the latter would put up with positive bites and thumps. The kitten ran at her every moment, gave her a knock, or a bite of the tail, and then ran back again to recommence the assault. The mother sat looking at her, as if betwixt tolerance and admiration, to see how far the spirit of the family was inherited or improved by her sprightly offspring. At length, however, the little pickle presumed too far, and the mother, lifting up her paw, and meeting her at the very nick of the moment, gave her one of the most unsophisticated boxes of the ear we ever beheld. It sent her rolling half over the room, and made her come to a most ludicrous pause, with the oddest little look of premature and wincing meditation.

"That lapping of the milk out of the saucer is what one's human thirst cannot sympathise with. It seems as if there could be no satisfaction in such a series of atoms of drink. Yet the saucer is soon emptied, and there is a refreshment to one's ears in that sound of plashing with which the action is accompanied, and which seems indicative of a like comfort to pussy's mouth. Her tongue is thin, and can make a spoon of itself. This, however, is common to other quadrupeds with the cat, and does not, therefore, more particularly belong to our feline consideration. Not so the electricity of its coat, which gives out sparks under the hand; its passion for the herb valerian (did the reader ever see one roll in it? It is a mad sight), and other singular delicacies of Nature,

among which, perhaps, is to be reckoned its taste for fish—a creature with whose element it has so little to do that it is supposed even to abhor it, though, lately, we read somewhere of a swimming cat, that used to fish for itself. And this reminds us of an exquisite anecdote of dear, dogmatic, diseased, thoughtful, surly, charitable Johnson, who would go out of doors himself and buy oysters for his cat, because his black servant was too proud to do it; not that we condemn the black in those enslaving, unliberating days. He had a right to the mistake, though we should have thought better of him if he had seen farther, and subjected his pride to affection for such a master. But Johnson's true practical delicacy in the matter is beautiful. Be assured that he thought nothing of condescension in it, or of being eccentric. He was singular in some things because he could not help it; but he hated eccentricity. No; in his best moments he felt himself simply to be a man, and a good man too, though a frail—one that in virtue as well as humility, and in a knowledge of his ignorance as well as his wisdom, was desirous of being a Christian philosopher—and accordingly he went out and bought food for his hungry cat, because his poor negro was too proud to do it, and there was nobody else in the way whom he had a right to ask. What must anybody that saw him have thought, as he turned up Bolt Court? But doubtless he went as secretly as possible—that is to say, if he considered the thing at all. His friend Garrick could not have done as much. He was too grand, and on the great stage of life. Goldsmith could; but he would hardly have thought of it. Beauclerk might; but he would have thought it necessary to excuse it with a jest, or a wager, or some such thing. Sir Joshua Reynolds, with his fashionable fine-lady-painting hand, would certainly have shrunk from it. Burke would have reasoned himself into its propriety; but he would have reasoned himself out again. Gibbon! Imagine it being done by Gibbon! He and his bag-wig would have started with all the horror of a gentleman-usher, and he would have rung the bell for the cook's deputy's under-assistant's errand boy."

Oysters are not fish—a negative fact in natural history which was rather slighted in the earlier part of the century now passing out of its third quarter. The graceful writer of the passage we have just read is oddly "reminded" of the succulent bivalve, and of the Johnson anecdote, as soon as the cat's love of

fish is mentioned. It is a wonder that he overlooked the opportunity of improving on his remark about the cat's being fond of fish, though no angler. Is it not strange and seemingly unnatural that a cat, or any creature unprovided with the means of opening oysters—which is a vastly more sophisticate proceeding than catching fish—should take to them as a favourite food? *Felis amat pisces sed non vult tingere plantas*, is the adage learnedly alluded to by Lady Macbeth, for the puzzlement of Shakspearian commentators, not one of whom appears to have remembered the proverb as applicable to the state of “letting I dare not wait upon I would.”

The German painters are great in the delineation of cats and kittens; and rarely has the feline character been so happily caught as by Herr Meyerheim in the picture before us. The faces of the human mother and child are not more charmingly truthful than the portraits of the cat and her progeny. As a parallel to this excellent work of art may be mentioned one with the same title, recently engraved from the original by Professor Knaus, of Berlin, and fast becoming popular in this country, together with the same painter's “Spring,” a representation of a child gathering flowers amid high grass, and surrounded with hovering butterflies. The kitten picture is perhaps the best, though preference in the matter is not easy. Coloured photography is doing its hardest to vulgarise “Im Frühling;” and so people of good tastes will be apt to fix their choice on “Die jungen Katzen,” just as Charles Lamb was driven into partiality for the least-known poets, merely because they were least known and their best thoughts least handled; and as Coleridge, when he quoted Bishop Butler, never drew from the “Analogy,” but always from the “Sermons at the Rolls' Chapel,” which very few people have ever read. The kittens in Knaus's picture are five; and three are being carried by a barefoot little peasant girl, while the other two are happily gambolling by themselves. The kittens that are being carried, and that are not at all grateful for the kindness, give the little girl a great deal of trouble. One is slipping down, another scrambling up, and the third, clutched in an embrace too close for movement of any kind, has a most comical expression of throttled helplessness. The cat, walking by the girl's side, and appealing to her with a wistful, upward look, is one of the best things in the picture. Meyerheim's cat is also excellent. Her slightly raised back, face half turned round towards the child

clutching at her fur, and expressive curl of the tail, are all perfect touches of Nature. And need we say a word for the two kittens? That word would be one of doubt, between the superlative truthfulness to life in the kitten lapping her breakfast and the kitten at play.

“Puss in Boots” and “The White Cat” are two of the best stories ever brought into the nursery. It is remarkable of both that, amid all the impossibilities of the fiction, the cat-like character is somehow preserved. The faithful feline follower and benefactor of the miller’s third son does not forget the trick of mousing; and the *dénouement* of the tale is cleverly brought about through this very means. The “White Cat” is a charming personage, as an Eastern princess in a fairy tale ought to be. White cats, especially those of the Persian breed, are beautiful creatures; and though it is alleged against them that they are treacherous and spiteful, exceptions to that rule—if it be a rule—are certainly not uncommon. When Her Majesty’s ship *Aurora* was at Copenhagen a few years ago, in attendance on the royal yacht *Osborne* which had taken the Prince and Princess of Wales on a visit to the King and Queen of Denmark, Lady Paget presented a very fine Persian cat, with long, white, silky hair, to the officers of the frigate; and during a trip to the Baltic and Stockholm, as also in later voyages, the animal was a great favourite with everybody on board, making itself quite at home in all parts of the ship, from the forecastle to Sir Leopold M’Clintock’s state cabin.

This is but one of many cases within the present writer’s observation flatly contradicting the theory that cats are unsociable in new homes; for what could have been a greater change of domicile than from the drawing-rooms of an embassy to the ’tween-decks of a man-of-war? Another striking piece of evidence to show that cats may partake with the canine race a fidelity of attachment to persons rather than to places, would appear in the history of a cat which followed its master from Kensington into Essex, and which went at a certain time every day to meet him at the railway-station, returning home on his shoulder. The remarkable part of this authentic case is that the owner of the cat was in the habit of teasing it until the creature would spit and “swear” like a demon. Peace being made between the two, puss would lick her master’s hand, as if nothing had happened.

Let us, in conclusion of this rambling chapter, take down old Izaak Walton

from the shelf, and read his quaint interpretation of the learned and ingenuous Montaigne. "When my cat and I entertain each other with mutual apish tricks, as playing with a garter, who knows but that I make my cat more sport than she makes me? Shall I conclude her to be simple that has her time to begin or refuse to play as freely as I myself have? Nay, who knows but that it is a defect of my not understanding her language (for doubtless cats talk and reason with one another) that we agree no better? And who knows but that she pities me for being no wiser than to play with her, and laughs and censures my folly for making sport for her, when we two play together?"

THE PET OF THE COMMON.



“POOR little foal of an oppressèd race !
I love the languid patience of thy face ;
And oft with gentle hand I give thee bread,
And clap thy ragged coat, and pat thy head.
But what thy dullèd spirits hath dismayed,
That never thou dost sport along the glade,
And (most unlike the nature of things young)
That earthward still thy moveless head is hung ?
Do thy prophetic fears anticipate,
Meek child of misery ! thy future fate—
The starving meal, and all the thousand aches
‘ Which patient merit of the unworthy takes ? ’
Or is thy sad heart thrilled with filial pain
To see thy wretched mother’s shortened chain ?
And truly very piteous is her lot—
Chained to a log within a narrow spot,
Where the close-caten grass is scarcely seen,
While sweet around her waves the tempting green.
Poor ass ! thy master should have learnt to show
Pity—best taught by fellowship of woe !
For much I fear me that he lives like thee,
Half famished in a land of luxury !
How askingly its footsteps hither bend,
It seems to say, ‘ And have I then one friend ? ’
Innocent foal ! thou poor despised forlorn !
I hail thee brother—spite of the fool’s scorn.
And fain would take thee with me, in the dell
Of peace and mild equality to dwell,
Where Toil shall call the charmer Health his bride,
And Laughter tickle Plenty’s ribless side.



How thou wouldst toss thy heels in gamesome play,
 And frisk about, as lamb or kitten gay !
 Yea, and more musically sweet to me
 Thy dissonant, harsh note of joy would be,
 Than warbled melodies that soothe to rest
 The aching of pale Fashion's vacant breast."

If Shakespeare had followed Coleridge—as he may have done, having been not for an age, but for all time—the sweet wag might very easily have been suspected of a sly burlesque on certain lines in the foregoing poetic apostrophe.

"And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
 And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy"

is a couplet that should have come rather after than before

"And oft with gentle hand I give thee bread,
 And clap thy ragged coat, and pat thy head."

Nevertheless, the youthful poem "To a Young Ass, its Mother being tethered near it," is a noble effusion, and all the nobler for being youthful. Some protest was needed in the matter of "The Fool's Scorn," which is the worst part of folly, and which, if it were deprived of a few stock images, would cease to be troublesome. Coleridge was two-and-twenty years of age when he had the wise courage and magnanimity to hail as brother the despised foal—thenceforth, indeed, a donkey out of the Common ! Byron had bad taste and weakness enough to gibe at the title of the poem, and at the very lines that should have deprecated the ridicule of a truly great poet.

"Shall gentle Coleridge pass unnoticed here,
 To turgid ode and humid stanza dear ?
 Though themes of innocence amuse him best,
 Yet still obscurity's a welcome guest.
 If Inspiration should her aid refuse
 To him who takes a pixy for a muse,
 Yet none in lofty numbers can surpass
 The bard who soars to elegise an ass.
 How well the subject suits his noble mind—
 'A fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind.'"

The noble bard changed his opinion of Coleridge somewhat later, and was one of the warmest and sincerest admirers of "Christabel," the "beautiful and tantalising fragment" to which Sir Walter Scott (also one of Byron's abject objects, reviled in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers") frankly acknowledged his obligations, declaring that the melody of the irregular metre had haunted him when engaged in writing "The Lay of the Last Minstrel."

See whither our young ass has galloped with us! We must haul him back to Mr. Horsley's homely bit of English common, and to the anxious dam, tethered amid fern and furze. The scene is a scene of every day; for which excellent reason it has appeared to the artist a scene well worth painting. Donkeys are not the only figures which, as Horace Smith says, are "uncommon common on a common." There are gipsies, and there are likewise geese. Our picture, not to be overcrowded, leaves out geese and gipsies; but leaves them out in such a way as to make them conspicuous by their absence. So familiar a common as this is cannot be always without its low hooped tents of black canvas, and the curling smoke from fires of green wood, and the lank, lithe, black-haired, bright-eyed, brown women, with babies at their backs—cannot be always without a flock of the cleanly white fowl that graze like sheep, cropping the grass with sidelong bill, and stretching up their straight and rigid necks now and then to see if there is anybody near worth hissing at. The goose, like the donkey, is a name unpleasing to a foolish ear. The genial and scholarly wit to whom allusion has been made, some ten lines back, addressed a wonderfully brilliant ode to a goose, "after dinner on the Feast of Saint Michael." The whole poem, stuffed with fancy as well as wit, is too long for a place here, but we may find room for one of the epodes:—

" Bird of Apollo! worthy to pluck grass
 On the Parnassian mountain,
 Beside the classic fountain
 Of Hippocrene, what muse with thee can class,
 To whose inspiring wing we owe
 All that the poets past have writ;
 From whose ungathered wings shall flow
 All our whole store of future wit?
 Well may'st thou strut
 Proud of thy pens uncut,

Which shall cut jokes
 In after times, for unborn folks ;
 Well may'st thou plume thyself upon thy plumage—all
 Is erudite and intellectual,
 Each wing a cyclopædia, fraught
 With genius multiform, a world of thought !
 Ah ! when thou putt'st thy head
 Beneath that wing to bed,
 In future libraries thou tak'st a nap,
 And dream'st of Paternoster Row, mayhap !
 What are *they* dreaming of, that they forget
 (The publishing and scribbling set)
 To apotheosise thee, Goose,
 As the TENTH MUSE ?”

Alas, we are losing, by rapid changes in the means and appliances of life and labour, all the old symbols ! The goose-quill is fast becoming as obsolete for literary purposes as the “grey goose shaft” has long been for warfare. Gillott and Mordan and the rest of the iron-pen men hold us in thrall. Farewell the free-flowing caligraphy and careless ease of a time when everybody's Pegasus had pinions, and was not shod with steel ! Who now talks of burning the midnight oil ? We write by gas, and complain of its deficiency of illuminating power, too often evident in *what* we write ! Even such comparatively modern metaphors as “red tape” are almost meaningless, and will soon require archæological explanation. The Government offices have given up red tape, as a matter of fact, long ago. Elastic bands are used instead. Whoa, Neddy ! The erratic young creature—our Pet of the Common—has bolted yet again, and must be brought back once more, to kick up his heels within decent limits.

The old one, his thistle-mumbling parent, who forsakes her prickly banquet yonder to bray a mother's tender solicitude, knows the common, every stump, stone, bush, briar, and molehill. But for the pitiable encumbrance fastened to her off fore fetlock, she would lead the youngster round by the sand-pits to the shady side of the church, where the grass on the graves is long and green. We can't have our way in this world, however ; or the boy who has set down the basket of trout and the partridges, that he is to carry to the squire's house, would

stop all night to play with the ass's foal ; and the ass's foal, having *his* way, would be let alone ; and the girl with a doll would wear fine clothes and ride to church in a carriage ; and the woman bearing a bundle would like it to be carried for her ; and the child with a trumpet would have a fiddle or a drum ; and they would all be still dissatisfied—except perhaps the ass and the ass's foal.

There is a growing jealousy with regard to commons and open places in the vicinity of large and populous towns. The feeling is, in the best sense of the word, natural. It is, moreover, well founded in justice and good sense—in “common” sense, let us say, without offence to people of Dr. Johnson's way of thinking ; though we may find it worth while to reflect that no such object as “the people's recreation” seems to have been considered in the laws laid down by our ancestors. Right of common was purely an agricultural right, and in no way touched those popular and sentimental questions of which we now hear a great deal. An old but not by any means obsolete commentator says :—

“Common, or right of common, appears from its very definition to be an incorporeal hereditament : being a profit which a man hath in the land of another ; as to feed his beasts, to catch fish, to dig turf, to cut wood, or the like. And hence common is chiefly of four sorts ; common of pastury, of piscary, of turbary, and of estovers. 1. Common of pasture is either appendant, appurtenant, because of vicinage, or in gross. Common appendant is a right belonging to the owners or occupiers of arable land, to put commonable beasts upon the lord's waste, and upon the lands of other persons within the same manor. Common appurtenant is where the owner of land has a right to put in other beasts, besides such as are generally commonable, as hogs, goats, and the like, which neither plough nor manure the ground. This, not arising from the necessity of the thing, like common appendant, is therefore not of common right ; but can only be claimed by immemorial usage and prescription, which the law esteems sufficient proof of a special grant or agreement. Common because of vicinage, or neighbourhood, is where the inhabitants of two contiguous townships have usually intercommoned with one another ; the beasts of the one straying mutually into the other's fields without molestation from either. 2. Common of piscary is a liberty of fishing in another man's waters ; as common of turbary is a liberty of digging turf upon another man's ground. 3. Common of estovers is a liberty of taking necessary

wood, for the use or furniture of a farm, from off another's estate. The Saxon word *bote* is of the same signification with the French *estoffer*, to furnish, or put stuff into; and therefore house-bote is a sufficient allowance of wood to repair, or to burn in, the house; plough-bote and cart-bote are wood to be employed in making and repairing all instruments of husbandry; and hay-bote or hedge-bote is wood for repairing of hays, hedges, or fences. These several species of commons do all originally result from the same necessity as common of pasture; viz., for the maintenance and carrying on of husbandry."

Thus Blackstone, with respect to Commons. Neither he nor any other legal authority says anything with respect to Pets.

THE ARMOURER.



THIS is no merely curious and pedantic picture of the past ; but, like many other works of the same careful hand, it is usefully designed to carry us back in spirit, rather than in dry historical circumstance, to a good time of reverent unsparing labour, in all arts that exercise the ingenuity and raise the intelligence of man. It opens to us a vision of earnest days long before the soulless devices of the foundry had thrust back the noble skill of the forge ; when the fine temper and exquisite finish of workmanship absolutely necessary in the material and the fashioning of a suit of armour lent themselves to the adornments of peaceful life ; when, in fact, the same strong and delicate hand that forged the trusty helm and breast-plate lingered more lovingly over works of ornament for the dwelling, the justice-hall, or the church.

You see, by the details of this truthful scene, that nothing was too humble or too fine, nothing too coarse or common, and nothing too laboriously beautiful and rare for the blacksmith of those truly dignified days of art and toil. At the farther end of this shop are horse-shoes, pincers, workmen's tools of various kinds ; all no doubt honestly serviceable, meant to last and to be useful so long as they lasted ; but still plain, and of little price. You see, too, that a woman of the humblest class has brought some kitchen utensil or ordinary drinking vessel for repair—a mere tinkering job, as we might call it. And then look at the objects in the foreground, all comeliness and fine elaboration. They are deemed worth copying and imitating, in our time ; they are “forged” in a very different sense from the true one, for words degenerate as well as handicrafts, and a modern Spenser would not describe a marvellously beautiful suit of armour as “uncouth,” by way of highly estimating its rarity. Yes, these excellent works of old are, in their modern reproductions, made vulgar instead of gracefully familiar, through the spurious



mechanical copies of scientific “art manufacturers,” who profane at once art and science in the multiplying these olden forms by a cheap and speedy process. Not alone in this matter do we see electricity put to the basest uses. South Kensington Museum, which purports to spread the love and knowledge of art among the people, and does in some sort fulfil its praiseworthy intention, contains many shams—vile imitative castings of embossed metal work of sheer, patient, toilsome effort, which will never be so much as really “imitated,” by the proper dexterity of studious handicraft, when the facile means of spurious reproduction is found to “save time, labour, and money.”

The Baron Henry Leys, who was born at Antwerp in 1814 or 1815, and who died there two or three years ago, was a pupil of De Braekler and a student in the academy of his native city. He was a devoted follower of old Flemish art, and one of the extremely rare instances in the history of painting of a genius and skill sufficiently matured, before the age of manhood, to produce a notable picture. Raffaele and Millais are foremost on the brief catalogue of boy-painters; for the young labours of Giotto, as of many other great artists who gave early manifestation of a divine gift, scarcely transcended mere promise. When the comparative greatness of divers arts is in debate, let it never be forgotten that painting is surely the most difficult of all, very few of its disciples having succeeded in doing anything remarkable with the brush till they were men. And yet, to pursue an obvious branch of thought, it is strange even to paradox that music, which has its professors of five years of age, which is the most thoroughly sensuous and non-intellectual of all the arts, is eminently masculine. Finished executants, competent interpreters of the thoughts of others, are pretty equally numerous in both sexes; but where will you find your great composer—nay, the writer of a single cantata—among the women? The smallest lyric work that ever held a night’s possession of the operatic stage was the production of a man’s or a boy’s mind—never of a woman’s. The fact is here repeated simply as a fact, though assuredly one that deserves consideration.

The picture by which Henry Leys, the Antwerp painter, won youthful renown was painted when he had just entered his nineteenth year; and, as it was distinctly related to the ancient art of the Low Countries, it produced as great a sensation, in those days, as did “The Carpenter’s Shop,” which heralded “pre-Raphaelism”

in England, some eighteen years later. The subject of the young Belgian painter's work was "The Massacre at Antwerp in 1576," and it was speedily followed by a similar composition, "The Massacre of the Magistrates of Louvain in 1379." In succeeding works, the pupil of De Braekner triumphantly demonstrated the often doubted—the too often doubted truth that boldness and spirit and individuality of thought and expression are the natural allies, instead of the antagonists, of a reverential regard for the worthiest lessons bequeathed by the past, and especially by those epochs in which "art was still religion."

England knew little or nothing of this modern Flemish painter's handiwork, of his fine colouring, truthful drawing, vital action, admirable *chiaroscuro*, until the Exhibition year of 1862, when, having travelled over Southern Europe, and gained, as an assimilative mind like his was sure to gain, by fresh pasturage, he contributed five or six works to the Belgian Fine Art Department, whereof the most remarkable was the picture which, at the sale of Mr. Uzielli's collection, in the previous year, had fetched the price of a thousand guineas—"Mary of Burgundy giving Alms to the Poor." A Belgian critic, whom Mr. Ottley quotes in his "Dictionary of Recent and Living Painters," says: "M. Leys has not perhaps that passionate impulsiveness, that character of *élan*, which charms and captivates us in the works of some of the ancient masters; but like them he has a patient and enduring inspiration, and many admirable qualities which are not commonly shared by artists of the day. He shows keeping in his forms and balance in his colouring, together with all the severe consciousness, all the close harmony in the *ensemble* of details, which we see in the old Flemish masters. Thanks to the firmness of his nature, he never loses himself in involuntary excess; he sees as from above, and disposes with skill his masses, the principal outlines of his plan, and his general effects, at the same time—rare conjunction of opposite qualities!—not neglecting the various parts of passages in all their detail. His colouring has the peculiar solidity and freedom of the Flemish school, its richness and warmth of expression." What seems to us best in this piece of criticism is the sentence in which due honour is paid to the "firmness of nature" manifest in the works of Baron Leys. Firm *handling* is obvious enough—a technical rigidity, one might almost venture to call it—but some strength of critical judgment, some generosity of acumen was needed to detect that higher and better firmness which

belongs to the soul rather than to the good right hand of the Antwerp student—an Antwerp student to the end of his days, too soon completed in the recent year, 1869.

Painted with extreme care and labour, this picture of “The Armourer,” which is owned by Her Majesty the Queen, almost resembles in dimensions and finish a work by Meissonier. It is eighteen inches in length, and some three inches less in height—larger than the Frenchman’s exquisitely condensed scenes, which look like really great paintings viewed through a diminishing glass, but still small of measurement. Rembrandt was not at any time the example followed by Leys, but there is certainly something Rembrandtish in the lights and shadows of this “interior;” we are carried back to earlier days than Rembrandt’s, however; and, as anachronisms are not among the careless faults of our modern historical painters, we might easily imagine this presentment of a mediæval artisan at his work to have been designed and executed before any of those scenes in which the miller’s son contrived to mingle with the faces and dresses of Dutch burgomasters many a Scripture story. In our Woodbury-type especially “The Armourer” has all the look of a composition from the school of an elder and nobler master than Rembrandt. There is, to be sure, little if any difference in point of costume between the figures of the picture and any blacksmith, blacksmith’s apprentice, and cottage-wife in the Low Countries at the present day; but the armour pretty plainly indicated the time as either late in the sixteenth or early in the seventeenth century.

A LABOUR OF LOVE.



BRICKS and mortar, joists, beams, floors, doors, windows, chimneys, and a roof, no more constitute home than stone walls make a prison, or iron bars a cage.

“If on windy days the raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less he loves his haven
On the bosom of a cliff.

“Though almost with eagle pinion
O’er the rocks the chamois roam,
Yet he has some small dominion
Which no doubt he calls his home.”

No doubt, indeed; as the author of “Confessions of an English Opium-eater” exclaimed, after quoting the same lines to embellish his argument that the English in China are, according to Chinese ethnography, worse off than are the naked natures that affront the elements. The Celestials, that is to say, knowing of our nation nothing more than was suggested by a few of its representatives at Canton, settled it as the most plausible hypothesis that the English people had no territorial home, but made a shift, like some birds, to float upon the sea in fine weather, and in rougher seasons to run for “holes.”

It is a common saying that half the world does not know how the other half lives; and we, for whose delectation these pictorial pages are devised, have a perfectly Chinese ignorance of the home-life of the young lady and younger gentleman in Mr. Dicksee’s joyous picture. Are they as the fowls of the air and the beasts of the desert—the raven and the chamois of humanity? To what haunt would a social Buffon track them? We look first at their feathers or their fur—the integumentary index being always regarded primarily by natural historians—and we ask what kind of nest or burrow will such appearances befit.



Truth to tell, however charming in a picture such a dwelling might seem through the magic lens of art, it is not likely to be one that the sanitary inspector would speak of with approbation, or the editor of the *Architect*, the *Builder*, or the *Engineer* depict as a model worthy adoption in newly-planned neighbourhoods. But though the roof be not only lowly, but considerably out of repair though the windows are dirty and broken, though the chimney vomits the blinding reek downward into the principal chamber instead of upward into the atmosphere, though the door is hard to open and impossible to shut, though the hovel in fact be contrived to keep out light and to let in cold and rain—the chill blasts not serving to expel the corrupted air—be it never so inconvenient and unhealthy, as well as humble, it is home, and there is no other place like it. Gambolling as the raven gambols—though the selection of this particular bird as a type of playfulness does certainly seem less apt than original—roaming as the chamois roams, our merry Scotch lassie and her little brother have hearts untrammelled, that fondly turn to the “small dominion,” which is dear to almost everything that breathes and feels. It is as homely a scene, this “Labour of Love,” as if Mr. Dicksee had given us the interior of the cottage, and the child being put to bed by his bright buxom sister.

But seriously, is it not reasonable to inquire, when we see tatters and untidiness in a picture, whether they would look well out of it; and if not, why they should be put so frequently as they are put to purposes picturesque? Mr. Ruskin refused to admit the picturesqueness of Stanfield’s old windmill—a tumble-down, unserviceable “foreground object”—and contrasted it with the working windmill in a picture by Turner, with its well-poised sails bending to the wind with just the proper resistance, as the blade of an oar bends in the water. May we not venture in the same spirit to complain when a great painter, who could hardly fail to set the stamp of natural truth and beauty on Fashion herself—though that is saying much—seeks an effect in slovenly attire? We by no means object, be it understood, to the bare feet. Even when associated with stark poverty, which is not of absolute necessity the case, they do not imply its worst squalor and wretchedness. Who is most to be pitied, a barefoot boy or girl roaming like the chamois—for we shall not relinquish that zoological illustration, though you may take away the raven and welcome—who, we ask, is most pitiable, the unshod lassie

running like a lapwing rather than a chamois perhaps, or the crippled young woman of fashion, slave to every vulgar whim of the day, and at this present time wearing the ridiculous heel of her boot just under the bend in the middle of her sole? A well-known physiologist was among the company who, at the bidding of a female pretender to calisthenic tuition, attended a half-public, half-private *séance* or *matinée gymnastique*, for the disporting of a bevy of young lady pupils in various bodily exercises. Very foolish and sadly misguided was the whole exhibition; but that which particularly moved the man of science to the utterance of impolite condemnation, was the little circumstance of all these girls being shod in the ludicrous or melancholy manner which presupposes the impossibility of a refined young woman's committal of so vulgar an act as walking. "Why, they're all wearing high-heeled boots!" he said. "Bless the silly woman! How does she think her pupils can balance their bodies or have the free use of their legs with such things to hamper them!" No shoes at all, then, are better than shoes which not only prevent the natural exercise of the feet, but actually throw the whole body out of proper trim.

But our barefooted peasant-girl is also a ragged peasant-girl. Her skirt is in a "looped and windowed" condition; and though there are people whose perverse judgment will declare a rent to be better than a darn, even these are not quite so extravagant as to maintain that a rent is not an evil—the lesser of two, but still an evil. Mr. Dicksee paints what he sees, you will perhaps reply; but he may surely see Scotch lassies with whole petticoats if he looks for them; and it would not be inartistic or anti-national to choose the neatest model he could find. Or are we to suppose a mildly satirical lesson as the moral purpose of the picture? It may be that the reflective painter seriously and deliberately takes the worst side of national peasant custom and habit, with intention to point out defects as the first step in amending them. He had in mind, perhaps, the peasant life of countries where no true condition of the picturesque is wanting, and yet where heedlessness of attire would not be tolerated in the humblest classes of society. Dutch cleanliness may be a little too prim and formal to afford us an illustration; but both in dress and dwellings, the Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians abundantly prove our case. There is a village not far from Copenhagen—a busy toiling village, supported in great measure by a large Government factory of arms. The

inhabitants are poor, as their employment is not highly paid ; but you may walk through that village twenty times without seeing a cracked pane of glass or a hole in the dress of man, woman, or child. In more pastoral spots of "Green Zealand," where costume is traditional—in fact, all over Europe, where costume is traditional among the peasantry—rags are an exception, even where dirt is a rule. Distinctive dress, in fact, means caste, and caste implies pride. Extravagances and vagaries in the fashion of clothes are signs of that equalising civilisation which makes all people desire to be like other people, rather than to support the exclusive dignity of the order to which they actually belong. From extravagances and vagaries will presently come carelessness, as it must inevitably come when rules are changeable and tastes capricious. The example of the fop creates the sloven. Costume, the distinguishing garb of class, is well said by Mr. Blackburn, in his pleasant book on Normandy, to bear upon its forehead the mark of truth ; "because, humble or noble, it is at least what it seems to be ; because it gives a silent but clear assurance that there is nothing behind the scenes, nothing to be discovered or hunted out. It is the relic of a really 'good old time,' when a uniform or a badge of office was a mark of honour, when the *bourgeoisie* were proud of their simple estate, and domestic service was indeed what its name implies. Compare the French *bonne* in her white cap with her English contemporary with a 'chignon' and the airs of 'my lady.'" It may be curiously remarked, by-the-by, that the bunch of hair distended from the nape of the neck—the *chignon*—is as old a fashion in Normandy as the days of Joan of Arc. The *paysanne* wears it unchangeably ; but since it was imitated from her by the fashionable world it has undergone many preposterous modifications.

There! We have gossiped long enough about our fair but foully-dressed friend, whose run over the rocky moor with her delighted little brother on her back is a Labour of Love ; and we have travelled, you will say, far and wide enough from our theme. That is our purpose with regard to all these "Homely Scenes," provided we never lose our way back again. So let us now bid both these interesting playmates a kind adieu, and dismiss them on their way to the hovel "which no doubt they call their home."

THE PRIDE OF THE VILLAGE.



A THEORY, traceable, we believe, to a very bright and hopeful philosopher, who was a little too much influenced by joyousness and the desire to see all the world happy, governs the pictorial taste of many people; and governs it, we are of opinion, wrongly. The kind counsellor who wrote, "Hang up a picture in your room," and who himself, as was once said of him by his friend Keats, could make any room beautiful at the cost of tenpence—an economical hyperbole, perhaps, but in spirit true enough—used to contend that all painful subjects were unpictorial. It is no mis-statement of his opinion to say, though the words are not ready to our instant quotation, that he would have had every picture carefully designed to please. We do not assert that he wished all pictures to be merry, or even that he would have deprived some of them of a certain tragic interest, for he by no means lacked the power of enjoying artistic pathos, dignity, and terror, and would probably have seen nothing unsuitable in the terms of Dr. Johnson's declaration that *Coriolanus* is one of the most *amusing* of Shakespeare's tragedies. But what he really did think was that nothing should purposely sadden the heart through the eye. Whatever of a tragic element there might be in the story, an idea of gladness or of hope should still prevail in the scene. For a picture, said he, was intended always to be in our sight; and that which is always in our sight ought not to give us pain.

Now, a picture is *not* intended to be always in our sight, for we shall look at it no longer than we choose to look. It is as reasonable to suppose that, having a volume of Tennyson's poems on our table, we should always be reading the second and most heart-rending part of "The May Queen," as that, with Mr. John Calcott Horsley's "Pride of the Village" framed on our wall, we should be perpetually poring over its melancholy subject. We can turn our eyes from the picture as



easily as we can lay down the book. We will be moved to sadness in either case just so long as it pleases us to be sad, and not a moment beyond that limit.

Practical confutation of that same too-æsthetic theory may not be hard to find. It will scarcely be denied that the picture "Waiting for the Verdict" was and is exceedingly popular. Nay, its popularity was and is chiefly among the least thoughtful and necessarily the most numerous part of the public, that "likes to be pleased." Is that picture painful? "Painful!" you reply; "it is positively harrowing. It is a most ingenious aggravation of present torture—of the uttermost mental suffering that can affect a whole family, from grandsire to dimly apprehensive child—intensified by the agony of suspense. If this be not a painful picture, no picture is painful." You are in the right. Mr. Solomon, who died before he had reached the ripeness of his powers, obviously strove to make this picture very painful—and very popular. It commanded, at the Royal Academy exhibition, more notice than any work of its year. It was described minutely, painted over again, by all the critics. It was so difficult of approach, that people went as soon as the doors were opened, and hurried up the stairs, and got a foremost place in front of it, and found, on turning to go away, that they were hemmed in by a crowd, all eager to be pained and pleased. It was engraved; and impatient subscribers coveted the etching, before the plate was finished. It was published; and there are not ten modern prints of the same price that have been so hugely distributed. Piratical photography has braved fine after fine, rather than relinquish so profitable a prize. In short, "Waiting for the Verdict" has, amid the applause of a crowded court, won the day with that enlightened jury, public opinion. This, however, did not satisfy all persons concerned in the case. Unmindful of the wise saw which bids us let well alone, they persuaded the artist that his picture was too painful to go without some companion work, that should relieve the gloom with a burst of happy sunshine. Accordingly, he painted "The Acquittal," bestowing quite as much thought and labour on this composition as on the first. But who cares about "The Acquittal?" Who knows the picture? Who, having beheld it, can call to mind a group, a face, or an expressive action in that exuberantly joyful scene? You may remember, perhaps, that a florid, curly-haired, chuckle-headed countryman is embracing his family in general; and that all the members are going wild or silly with joy.

But can you say, can anybody say, with a clear conscience, that "The Acquittal" interests and even pleases, in the same degree as that which is reached by "Waiting for the Verdict?" And let us suppose that this calm and sorrowful picture, "The Pride of the Village," were supplemented with a design making all things pleasant. Let us suppose, if so many incidents could be crowded together, the mother clapping her hands with delight at a piece of good news from the medical attendant, the girl in the arms of her penitent and faithful adorer, and the old man her father snapping his fingers and skipping about in a delirium of parental joy. The thought is almost enough to make one ashamed of having conceived it. It is a foolish profanity, a vulgar impertinence, an anticlimax as bad as a happy ending to *Roméo and Juliet*, with a dance of all the characters.

The theme of Mr. Horsley's undoubtedly saddening picture, which was painted thirty-three years ago, might almost be identified with that poem of Tennyson's which we have already named, and which enjoys the widest and most universal popularity. But in fact the painter's work relates to a tale told by Washington Irving, in his "Sketch Book"—a simple story such as Goldsmith or Steele might have written. "In the course of an excursion through one of the remote counties of England," says the delightful American author, "I had struck into one of those cross-roads that lead through the more secluded part of the county, and stopped one afternoon at a village, the situation of which was beautifully rural and retired. There was an air of primitive simplicity about its inhabitants, not to be found in the villages which lie on the great coach roads."

How many primitive villages, beautifully rural and retired, are there in England now? Certain very picturesque places of the kind, no doubt, yet linger on the face of the country, scored about as it is by the iron highway. But there are very few that can possibly retain such character of seclusion and remoteness as, in those days of "Geoffrey Crayon's" visit, belonged to villages not situate "on the great coach roads." Some such villages now give their names to the stations on this or that junction line of railway. There is no spot that is sacred—no, not one. There is not a churchyard that is exempt from the operations of an Act of Parliament that may be passed at any time, enabling a company to cut clean through. The days of sanctuaries and of all-hallowed associations are gone.

To the churchyard of the retired village found by "Geoffrey Crayon" the rambling steps of that traveller were led. The church itself was, he writes, an object of some curiosity, its old tower being completely overrun with ivy, so that only here and there a jutting buttress, an angle of grey wall, or a fantastically carved ornament peered through the verdant covering. The time of the visit was well suited to the scene. "It was a lovely evening," says the narrator of the tale. "The early part of the day had been dark and showery, but in the afternoon it had cleared up, and though sullen clouds still hung overhead, yet there was a broad tract of golden sky in the west, from which the setting sun gleamed through the dripping leaves, and lit up all Nature with a melancholy smile. It seemed like the parting hour of a good Christian, smiling on the sins and sorrows of the world, and giving, in the serenity of his decline, an assurance that he will rise again in glory." After this fitting prologue, Washington Irving's sweet pastoral tragedy begins.

While seated on a half-sunken tombstone, musing as one is apt to muse, at the sober-thoughted hour of parting day, on those who are distant and those who are dead, and finding in melancholy fancies something sweeter even than pleasure, he heard the solemn sound of a bell, which was so thoroughly in unison with the scene, that he did not immediately think of its being "the knell of some new tenant of the tomb." Presently he saw a funeral train moving across the village green. "It wound slowly along a lane; was lost, and re-appeared through the breaks of the hedges," till it passed the place where he was sitting.

Most English of Americans, gentlest of Englishmen and wits, how sweet a picture of English rural sorrow is that which thou didst draw, sitting on the grey and crumbling tombstone in the village churchyard! Almost too pure and simple for these times of grinning travestie and vulgar antipathy to sentiment, is the tale to which, nevertheless, we now turn for the actual illustration of the painter's Homely Scene. Irving himself, in a—so to speak—Charles-Lamb-like essay on the Mutability of Literature, almost foreshadowed the dull day of parody and insane ridicule which makes amusement a weariness and mirth a toil.

Returning to the inn, after having seen the coffin, with its virgin chaplet of white flowers, laid in the earth, our good Geoffrey Crayon learned the story of the dead, and told it in language which we now repeat with some necessary

compression. The buried girl had been the beauty and "pride of the village." Her father, once an opulent farmer, was reduced in circumstances. This was an only child, and brought up entirely at home, in the simplicity of rural life. She had been the pupil of the village pastor, the favourite lamb of his little flock. The tenderness and indulgence of her parents, and the exemption from all ordinary occupations, had fostered a natural grace and delicacy of character that accorded with the fragile loveliness of her form. She appeared like some tender plant of the garden, blooming accidentally amid the hardier natives of the fields.

The village was one of those sequestered spots which "still retain," said Irving, who wrote this tale rather early in his career, when Sir Walter Scott was his kind and cordial encourager in the path of letters, "some vestiges of old English customs." It had its holiday pastimes, and still kept up some faint observance of the once popular rites of May. These indeed had been promoted by its pastor, one of those simple Christians that think their mission fulfilled by promoting joy on earth and goodwill among mankind. The May-pole stood from year to year in the centre of the village green; on May-day it was decorated with garlands and streamers; and a Queen or Lady of the May was appointed, as in former times, to preside at the sports, and distribute the prizes and rewards. The picturesque situation of the village and the fancifulness of its rustic fêtes would often attract the notice of casual visitors. Among these, on one May-day, was a young officer, whose regiment had been recently quartered in the neighbourhood. He was charmed with the native taste that pervaded this village pageant, but above all with the dawning loveliness of the Queen of the May. It was the village favourite, who was crowned with flowers, and blushing and smiling in all the beautiful confusion of girlish diffidence and delight. The artlessness of rural habits enabled him readily to make her acquaintance, and to win his way in her intimacy.

There was nothing in his advances to startle or alarm. He never even talked of love; but she loved almost unconsciously, and looked not to the future. When present, his looks and words occupied her whole attention; when absent, she thought but of what had passed at their recent interview. She would wander with him through the green lanes and rural scenes of the vicinity. He taught her to see new beauties in Nature; he talked in the language of polite and cultivated life,

and breathed into her ear the witcheries of romance and poetry. Perhaps there could not have been a passion more pure than this innocent girl's. Her attachment had something in it of idolatry. She looked up to him as to a being of a superior order. She felt in his society the enthusiasm of a mind naturally delicate and poetical, and now first awakened to a perception of the beautiful and grand. Of the sordid distinction of rank and fortune she thought nothing; it was the difference of intellect, of demeanour, of manners from those of the rustic society to which she had been accustomed, that elevated him in her sight.

Her lover was equally impassioned, but his passion was mingled with feelings of a coarser nature. He had begun the connection in levity. Still, his heart had not yet been rendered sufficiently cold and selfish by a wandering and dissolute life; it caught fire from the very flame it sought to kindle, and he became really in love. What was he to do? There were the old obstacles which so incessantly occur in these heedless attachments, and which forbid him to think of matrimony. But when he looked down upon this innocent being, so tender and confiding, there was a purity in her manners, a blamelessness in her life, and a beseeching modesty in her looks that awed down every licentious feeling. In vain did he try to fortify himself by a thousand heartless examples within his knowledge. Whenever he came into her presence, she was still surrounded by that mysterious but impassive charm of virgin purity in whose hallowed sphere no guilty thought can live.

Suddenly his regiment is ordered abroad. He hesitates to give her the intelligence till the actual day of departure is at hand; and then he breaks the tidings to her, in the course of an evening ramble. The idea of parting has never before occurred to her; she looks upon it as a sudden and insurmountable evil, and weeps with the guileless simplicity of a child. When he draws her to him and kisses the tears from her cheek, he meets with no repulse; and the sight of beauty apparently yielding in his arms, the confidence of his power over her, and the dread of losing her for ever, all conspire to overwhelm his better feelings. He proposes flight. At first she is at a loss to comprehend his meaning, but when at last the nature of the proposal flashes upon her pure mind, she is distracted anguish and dread, and flies from him to her father's cottage.

Amid the stir of camps, the revelries of garrisons, the array of armies, and even the din of battles, the young soldier's thoughts steal back sometimes to the scenes

of rural quiet and village simplicity—the white cottage, the footpath along the silver brook and up the hawthorn hedge, and the little village maid loitering along it, leaning on his arm and listening to him, with eyes that beam with unconscious affection. And what of her after-story? With the destruction of her ideal world, she too is shattered; and in a moment of saddened tenderness she writes him a simple letter of forgiveness and farewell. To those about her she utters no complaint. She never even mentions her lover's name, but lays her head on her mother's bosom and weeps in silence.

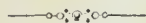
She has been sitting between her poor parents one Sunday afternoon. The lattice is thrown open; the fragrance of the honeysuckle which her own hands have trained is borne in by the soft air. Her father has just been reading a chapter in the Bible; it speaks of the vanity of worldly things, and of the joys of heaven: it seems to have diffused comfort and serenity through her bosom. Her eye is fixed on the distant village church: the bell has tolled for the evening service; the last villager is lagging into the porch; and everything has sunk into that hallowed stillness peculiar to the day of rest. Her parents are gazing on her with yearning hearts. A tear trembles in her soft blue eye. Is she thinking of her faithless lover? Or are her thoughts wandering to that distant churchyard into whose bosom she is soon to be gathered?

A clang of hoofs is heard. A horseman rides up to the cottage and dismounts before the window. The poor girl utters a faint exclamation, and sinks back in her chair. It is he, returned, repentant, but too late. He is at her feet, and she extends her trembling hand. Her lips move, but no word comes. She looks down upon him with a smile of love and pardon, and closes her eyes for ever!

"I have passed through the place since," says the true and tender American, "and have visited the church again. It was a wintry evening; the trees were stripped of their foliage; the churchyard looked naked and mournful, and the wind rustled coldly through the dry grass. But evergreens had been planted about the grave of the village favourite, and osiers were bent over it to keep the turf uninjured."



MATERNAL EMBRACES.



THERE never was, and until the world is greatly altered there never will be, so unfading an interest of pictorial subject-matter as we behold in this little scene from the pencil of M. Toulmouche. Of all earthly love, of all love that we can imagine to be nearest to the heavenly, that of a mother for her child is, out of question, the most beautiful. The early painters, with whom the presentment of the Madonna holding the Infant Christ was an untiring occupation, might have counted on the simple theology of nature for the perpetual interest of their works. It scarcely needs the adoring spirit of the devotee to be vanquished and overcome by the strong gentleness of these pictures. The piety of maternal affection is quite enough to charm our eyes and hearts.

And M. Toulmouche is a Frenchman. He paints, we may suppose, more for Frenchmen than for us English; and what native of France is there, of a picture-buying time of life, who does not melt into tears at the word "mother?"

To say truth, our painter, a pupil of the famous Gleyre, has little in common with those religious artists of whom we have spoken. Mamma, who fondles her pet in this picture, and in very many other pictures by Toulmouche, belongs to the world. If not a sinner, she is yet more certainly not a saint. When her darling has been relinquished to the nurse's ready hands, this pretty lady will smooth her rumpled ribands, glance at the mirror, and glance from that to her watch, to see if it is time to change her robe for some lighter dress becoming the dinner-table and the evening's toilsome gaiety. It is good-bye to Bébi till mid-day to-morrow—whatever time Maman's mid-day happens to be.

That Bébi does not see much of Maman is highly probable. But all the more delightful, perhaps, is this gush of elegant affection, so touching in its tenderness and so graceful in its *pose*. Do you say there is more of millinery than

of motherhood in the scene? You must not be too hard on a school which is quite true to its own view of Nature—which is true to Nature herself, so far as she is manifest in the manners and customs of certain people. The art of M. Auguste Toulmouche is restricted to the *salons* of Parisian society, but it is not on that account more restricted than the art of M. Edouard Frère, who goes only into the cottages of the poor. M. Frère's choice is the nobler, no doubt, and it is not threatened with those perils of vulgarity from which the subjects of the Nantes artist's brush cannot be wholly free. But in his way Toulmouche is perfectly faithful to the narrow phase of life he depicts. There is even, in the midst of his conventionalism, a simplicity scarcely inferior to that of the greater and more humane artist. Nothing could well be simpler than the picture we are now looking at, though, to be sure, the simplicity is not of a much more dignified character than belongs to a photographer's background and common-place group of stock "accessories."

It would be about as fair to seek a parallel in this picture to Sir Joshua's "fine lady" mother and child, at the beginning of the book, as to compare Frith with Raphael. Yet we cannot altogether avoid the suggestion which arises from the mere fact of the two "homely scenes" being here together. Each shows us a Madonna and Child; and the Madonna, or Madame, in either case is a woman of rank. At least, though the original of the French artist's portrait is not known to us, we have the indications of wealth and splendour as much insisted on as in the picture of "Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire." For aught we know, this may be a duchess too; but, also for aught that the painter contrives to *let* us know, she might be a lady's-maid. We could fancy just such a face, with its pretty, petty, half demure and half supercilious look, waiting her grace's commands to come or go, or do this thing or the other.

By no means is M. Auguste Toulmouche incapable of giving intelligent or even passionate expression to a face, when he thinks it necessary to do so. He does not always, or often, think it necessary; because he is accustomed to look for his models among a class well schooled to hide their emotions when they have any to hide. This picture of his, and a similar work called "The Prayer," are triumphs of his peculiar skill in giving a kind of interest to costly furniture and vapid domesticity. But he now and then breaks away from a routine of labour

in which he has been tempted by success to continue. A companion picture to "The Prayer" is "The Lesson," and in this last-named work occurs a bit of truly admirable child-character. A little girl, whose attention is held partially under command by her mamma's anxiously inquiring look, as if she would penetrate the small pupil's mind and drag forth the answer, sits bolt upright, trying all she can to forget her doll, a gay *Polichinelle*, that leans in a limp and broken-backed attitude against the leg of her chair. Now, the marvellous merit of this picture is that, though the doll is out of the child's sight, and the stare of the round young eyes, laboriously concentrated by pressure of the brows, is yielded in obedience to the mother's admonition, nobody can for a moment miss the humorous point, which plainly is this central fact—the inability of the little girl, with all her effort, to disengage her mind from Punch, who sits dejectedly grinning on the floor. Of course, if we choose to pursue a train of thought very obviously open to us, we may see in "The Lesson" a lesson which has yet to be learned by those who pretend to teach the young. Affectionately patient and painstaking as is the pretty mother in M. Toulmouche's last-named picture, she has hardly hit on the right method of commanding the attention of her little girl. The truly wise and hopeful attempt would be, not to force the pupil's mind away from Punch—which indeed is impossible—but to invest Punch with the function of under-teacher. Germany has made great way in this rational theory and benign art of instruction. Other ways of getting knowledge into childish minds than the way of Mrs. Pipchin, or the Reverend Dr. Blimber, are much in favour with that solid and thoughtful nation. Object-teaching has been latterly tried in our own country, where indeed it is not entirely new, though prejudice has never allowed it fair play. The poetically-named "Kindergarten" is now a recognised institution among us; and that every such garden may flourish and bear the fruit of useful knowledge, sound sense, familiar love of art and beauty, and true religion, is what all who have children, or who love them, must pray for.

Let the toy, then, be the "Primer," or first book. If it be veritably a *book*, of the toy-kind, full of pictures that a child can understand and take an interest in, and feel a curiosity about, so much the better. But a toy that is not a book in form may be one in spirit. If it do not educate one faculty it will another; nor is it philosophical to suppose, because Punch, in the picture we have

described, cannot teach the little girl geography or any specific science, that therefore he is a profitless and idle companion, from whom she should be made to part, with tears and lamentations. The very circumstance of her being fond of him is a sign, or at least a promise, that he will have had some little hopeful influence, which we may not be able exactly to define and appreciate, upon her. Childhood has the bee-like faculty of extraction; and our mature wisdom, which would "put the violet into a crucible," is not so effective as the childish way of getting at the honey.



THE BEAUTY OF ALBANO.



ALL kinds of beauties are to be found at the town built partly on the site of Pompey's villa and partly on the ruins of the villa of Domitian, rather more than twelve English miles from Rome by the Via Appia—too rich in neighbouring monuments and reminiscences to be thought of without fear of going astray. There are French beauties, and English beauties, and American beauties; and the South German painter, Riedel, to whose graceful and vivacious pencil, dipped in Italian colour, we owe this captivating portrait, may perhaps have met one of his fair countrywomen in the favourite retreat of Roman society, during those months in which Rome is not a sanatorium. It is not an Italian face, it is not an Italian manner, that Riedel, who nevertheless had lived and studied long among Italian models when he painted the picture before us, would seem to have caught.

We must all agree in a protest against the picture's title. Beauty is the wrong word, or at all events not the right word of all words, to begin with. The face is pretty, not beautiful; there is a spice of flirtation, of gentle sauciness, in the glance, that we will take leave utterly to repudiate as a possible concomitant of true Beauty. Then, Albano—why Albano, except that the picture happened to be painted there? “The Pretty Girl of Dunkirk” or “The Belle of Tenby” would have done just as well, and indeed much better; for the damsel might have been bred and born at either of those places, or at any other place, rather than one whose native population has for the most part descended from the Pelasgic colonists of Italy.

If you meet our merry modern friend—her costume, by-the-by, is of the fashion of younger days, and perhaps she is stouter now, and more sedate, and has a daughter quite as old and not a bit more Etrusco-Italian in feature—if you meet her or her like, let us say, in the course of a jaunt to Hannibal's Camp or Monte

Cavo, or in the shady path to the hill that commands the Lago Castello, or at the best inn's bad *table d'hôte* where the most delicious eels in the world, caught in the lake aforesaid (which is, geologists tell us, the crater of a volcano), are not cooked to perfection, how would you converse? Doubtless she would speak very good French, even were she, as she looks, Saxon or Teutonic. More probably you would be chatting with her in familiar English; and she would ask you whether you had been to Naples, and if you thought it "nice;" or how you liked Rome as a place to live in, and whether you did not think Venice might be made much more agreeable, with all those big palaces, and not a stuffy room in any one of them. Or she would be reminded by the eels of a certain Ingoldsby legend, which is quoted almost as often as eels come to table. "Don't you remember?" she says. Of course you remember. "Isn't it something about popping poor dear Sir Somebody's body back again into the pond, to catch us some more? Sir Thomas, was it not?" "Yes, certainly." And then you say you *could* say a good many nastier things about eels. And she says, "Pray don't." And you do.

That is pretty like the probable conversation between you, reader—supposing you are of the inferior sex that smokes cavendish and wears a beard—and the Beauty of Albano. Beauty of Albano! Beauty of Fiddlestick! Didn't you meet her at Ems last year, and in Florence the year before that? Was she not on with young Spoonbill at Malvern, soon after she was off with old Muffington at Llandudno? And does not Spoonbill say now that her family came from Belfast?

But softly! Might we not suppose, by a quibble almost allowable in these phrase-twisting times, that "The Beauty of Albano" is an expression referring to topographical and not feminine charms; that, indeed, the young lady is leading us into a quiet chat about Albano and its beauty of situation? In this sense, the Beauty of Albano is indeed a fruitful, or at least a flowery theme; but then it should have fallen to a landscape-painter, who has the power to make the most of tolerably picturesque scenery. Of Albano, the merry-eyed flirt in the laced apron would say, as she said of Naples, that it is "nice." She looks just the girl to use that word, without reflecting that it has a subjective, not an objective meaning. A nice palate prefers one delicate morsel to another; but if the owner of the nice palate be a nice etymologist, he would never think of calling the morsel

he liked a *nice* morsel. "Nice" has of late years given place, in drawing-room slang, to "jolly," and it is a thousand pities that this Miltonian adjective should be made vulgar by flippant girls and young men who affect a languid cretinism, not without a certain truthfulness of appearance. "Awfully jolly" is perhaps one of the silliest phrases that ever dropped into a language from off the stage of a music-hall. We have certainly not improved that language in our generation. A choice of the wrong word seems often to be purely wilful. "Exceptional," "exceptionally," are words frequently wrested, in politely vulgar parlance, from their true signification. We are told of the exceptionally good performance of an overture, or the exceptional excellence of this, that, or the other, when evidently all that is meant is something a little beyond mere ordinary matter of course. To say that an overture has been *exceptionally* well played implies that overtures are, as a rule, played badly. Loose speakers, and writers with extremely limited vocabularies, are mischievous animals, spoiling what they cannot use. It requires some strength of mind in an accurate linguist to get over his unreasonable distaste for a phrase he has often heard misapplied. When, for instance, he has to say that such or such a thing is exceptional, he will hesitate to do so, because he has often heard others say the same without meaning it. In like manner, though he would desire to speak of "mutual friendship," and might so speak intelligibly enough, he dare not in the face of that *unintelligible* vulgarity, "a mutual friend." Or he would feel debarred from telling us of an "alleged murder," because the newspaper in which he has read about it speaks also of an "alleged murderer." Or he would altogether eschew the use of the two comparatives, "superior" and "inferior," only because he sometimes hears the words used in genteel society as adjectives in the positive degree, and may even have heard them converted into adverbs, thus, "a superiorly dressed person," or "an inferiorly trained dog."

We are making a long board, to use a nautical metaphor; but the next line of our zig-zag shall be short, to make these odds all even. It is sadly irksome and humiliating to see that, having greater wealth, or greater store, of words than our fathers had, we are growing more and more careless of meanings. Must we be actual losers by the gain of our swollen dictionary? Do the many additions fail to repay us for expressive and poetical nouns and verbs that we have allowed to become obsolete? Is it a penance for our grasping acquisition of scientific

terms, that we are obliged to read Chaucer through the dimmed spectacles of a glossary ?

For English undefiled we must seek in very out-of-the-way places. A gibbering rabblement of West Indian blacks will, from their odd jumble of a dialect, strike out some sparks of our old vigorous tongue. When a certain commission sent out to investigate the rights and the wrongs of magisterial and military conduct, in putting down a negro riot or insurrection, sat day after day in the official oven at Spanish Town, many quaint and home-spun words were used in evidence by the poor ignorant witnesses ; and the meaning was questioned by the commissioners and the learned counsel on both sides the table—educated gentlemen, fresh from the fair English counties. There was a talk of wattled huts—huts built of wattle, or plaited twigs and withes, to be afterwards smeared over with mud—temporary domiciles, which that natural nomad and squatter, the African, builds and abandons with equal speed. A re-interpretation of the old English word “wattle,” from *Niggerish* back again into the English of refined society, was needed, before the true idea of a wattled hut could be conjured up for our enlightenment.

Something of the same kind once happened in a London police-court, the prosecutor in the case being a summoning constable, and the defendant a drover. The old gentleman on the bench was boggling over the word “cattle,” which he took to signify animals only of the bovine kind ; and he questioned the policeman’s view of the law, in summoning this drover for contravention of a certain statute ; the offence in complaint having been the driving of *sheep* through the public streets at a time interdicted for such proceeding. “Cattle,” said his worship, “cattle and sheep are different things.” The policeman was silent ; but he looked as if he would have liked to deny this un-English proposition, had he dared. Here is a good old word paralysed and deprived of half its use by sophistication. The agriculturists are in this case to blame as much as the cockney, or perhaps more. “Cattle, sheep, and pigs,” say those who ought to know better, and who might as well divide the brute creation into animals, bears, and black-and-tan terriers. The true definition of “cattle” is, “beasts of pasture, being neither wild nor domestic”—beasts, in fact, of the field ; as are sheep, as well as oxen, cows, and heifers. It is curious to note that so cautious an artist in words as Joanna Baillie

was one of the first who fell into this error of making a distinction without a difference, and removing sheep out of their proper category. "The flocks are in fold," she says—"The flocks are in fold, *and the cattle* in shed." But the interpretation of the Act under which the policeman, etymologically wise in his generation, summoned the drover, was found by the faulty grammarian sitting on the bench to be well supported by English lexicons. Sheep, he was obliged to confess, after due investigation of the point, are cattle; as, for that matter, are pigs, likewise.

When Monsieur Blondin was at the height of his high-rope popularity, and was winning golden medals from Crystal Palace directors and all sorts of people, a glowing description of his performance contained the *bizarre* intimation that the great funambulist walked along the cord "with his feet *manacled*." The converse of this peculiar etymology was more recently shown on the dead walls and hoardings of the town. A hand chained to another hand, or to the grim shadow of one, was ludicrously labelled with the term "Fettered." There seems no excuse for this Malaprop treatment of words the meaning of which stares you in the face. Everybody ought to know enough of Latin to guard him against the misuse of such a word as "manacle;" and it is as plain that fetters are not, as that manacles are, for the hands.

How common it is to hear of a "telescopic dining-table!" What can it be? "Oh!" says the furniture-man, or the easy-going talker, who will echo trade-slang without thinking—"oh, why, of course, a telescopic dining-table is a dining-table that *pulls out*." And so, because a telescope "pulls out" and a dining-table "pulls out," the table is a telescopic table! Never mind that the essential function of a telescope is not the pulling or being pulled out, but something of greater import and value; and that, moreover, the telescope would still be a telescope if it could be so fashioned as to perform that essential function without any change of length. But what a slovenly thinker a man must be who will content himself with such a miserable make-shift of a term as this "telescopic dining-table!" There are two words which are oftener misapplied, perhaps, than any other six; and those two words are "probable" and "belief." By "probable" is meant, in nine cases out of ten, "likely;" but that is a long way off the true meaning. A probable occurrence is no matter of speculation or conjecture; it is a fact *capable of proof*. We say, "*I believe* this or that to be so-and-so," when we are not at all sure of

it—as the man in the old jest-book said he would not mind taking his oath to a circumstance, but that he should not like to bet. In courts of justice you are asked to depone things “to the best of your belief,” even after you have expressly declared that you have no knowledge of the matter in hand. But belief is really something *more* than reasonable knowledge, instead of something *less*—in which latter sense the learned counsel takes it when he says, with stern persuasiveness, “No, no; we don’t ask you to assert positively that it was so; but to the best of your belief was it not?” The best of a man’s belief is the ultimate climax of his conviction. If he really believes a thing, it is not because, as the learned counsel would imply, he is subject to a vague impression on his memory and understanding, or sort of singing in the head.

The consideration of modern euphuisms, and their exceeding feebleness, has led us into a long digression, but we pursue it yet a little further in the hope that such labour may not be wholly unavailing. Let us beg the reader to join with us in discountenancing the vulgar use of the word “arrival.” Of late years, we have never heard of spring’s coming in; but always of its having, or not having, arrived. And why is it impossible for a certain refined class of talkers and writers to tell us plainly that they have seen anything? Why must they prefer saying they have witnessed it? Seeing is not witnessing. We see thousands of things that we never witness; and it is quite possible for us to be witnesses of things that we never see. “To witness,” by-the-by, is a bad verb; but let it pass. It is at least a serviceable substitute for the now disused and generally unintelligible “testify.” To say “I witnessed,” or “I was witness of,” this, that, or the other, when the intended statement is merely “I saw it,” is one of the most frequent of vulgar euphuisms. There is the miserable verb “to commence,” which all the newspaper writers have suddenly adopted instead of “to begin.” Imagine the change throughout our literature! Think of it in Shakespeare! “Commence, murderer; leave your damnable faces and commence.” Think of it in the Bible! “In the commencement,” for “In the beginning!” No; it is too dreadful. The verb, especially in its past tense, is often abbreviated by the old poets. Nothing is more frequent in Chaucer and Spenser than the monosyllable *'gan*. Suppose we had *'menced* instead. Is not that a very pretty reduction to the absurd?

Well, our “Beauty” looks as if she would very soon “commence” to talk

about the places she has been to look at, round about Albano. The village of Castel Gandolfo disappointed her very much. If it had not been for those lovely trees—ilexes, are they not?—she would not have thought the journey worth so much trouble. What a horrid place Ostia is! They say the *mal' aria* there is worse than it is anywhere. She supposes those dreadful salt-works have something to do with it. No? Don't you think so? Really? Well, but they say, you know, ancient Ostia was very much frequented by the Romans; and that was before they had the *salinæ* there, was it not? So you see the place must have been healthier than it is now. How wonderfully the Tiber winds, between Rome and Ostia! It looks like any number of rivers, instead of only one. The *mal' aria* does not seem to disagree with the ducks, or whatever they are—those birds that cover the Dead Lake. She could not find half the things that Murray speaks of, as the traces of the theatre. Her belief is that antiquarians have a great deal more imagination than they are generally credited with, and the poets a great deal less. Are you a poet? She hopes not; or at least, if you are, that you will forgive and forget her rudeness when you are writing “Recollections of Albano.” A great many literary persons have been there, you know, and have printed all kinds of absurd things about the place. She would like very much to write a guide-book, and to speak her mind.

Who would not? Ah, Beauty of Albano! there are times when the spirit of candour enters every breast, and the wish to be out-spoken almost overcomes the instinct of social self-preservation. But we end by kissing our thumb-nails instead of the book, and by speaking not quite the whole truth that is in us. Nay, it is well that some of the evidence we are able to give the Court should be suppressed. Otherwise we might confirm a few of the ungenerous tales rehearsed by Spoonbill, and might add much more to the same effect; “all which, though we most potently believe, yet we hold it not honesty to have it thus set down.”

THE FIRST APPEAL.



FRANK STONE was a painter concerning whose qualities, while he lived and worked, there was a wide difference of opinion—wide, that is to say, for the small area which those qualities afforded as the field of debate. A thin fastidious character, in which crudeness and refinement are strangely mingled, is common to all the pictures by which he is known. One of the most popular of these is his early work, “The Heart’s Misgiving.” A handsome lordling, heartless and brainless alike, by his look, lounges negligently on a stone bench of his castle keep, teasing a falcon with the tip of a feather. His hound watches jealously to catch a share of his notice; and his richly-dressed young wife, not yet accustomed to the loneliness of a luxurious and loveless dignity, stands motionless as the pillar against which she is leaning, and muses with a sad expression of yearning and half-awakened regret. The boy and girl are—and this of course is the tragic point of the painter’s story—an ill-assorted pair. All Mr. Stone’s themes were but variations of the one theme, love—love and its uncertainties rather than its trustfulness, its griefs more than its joys. There is the picture, for instance, to which this one now before us was painted as a companion. “The Last Appeal” had an extraordinary popularity, greater even than that of “The Heart’s Misgiving;” and it set the fashion for simple pictorial tragedy of common life, which was followed in such notable works as Mrs. Setchel’s prison-scene, “The Momentous Question.”

Frank Stone—the name is one of those curious inventions of mere chance which are as apt as anything of the kind in fiction. The duality that became so monotonous in the painter’s productions is suggested by the two simple syllables; as also is the *genial rigidity* of style. If, conscious of his peculiarities and the limitation of his genius, the artist had wished to assume a name, he could not have hit on a happier combination than the reality. One may fancy the artistic pleasure



with which a story-writer of the realistic school would, by a sudden inspiration, devise a name like this, for a man like *that*. When we perceive the charm there is in a really well-fashioned and well-fitting name—a name that cleaves to a personage as a garment—it is impossible to grudge the pains bestowed on it by a novelist; though the pampered taste of the present age of readers may perhaps exact, in this particular, more pains than will quite be justified. There is a refinement of ingenuity in Thackeray's names, and still more in their relation one to another, which, though often captivating, is within an ace sometimes of being tiresome, and is at all times a very different thing from the hit-or-miss nomenclature to be found in most of his favourite eighteenth century models, of whom Fielding was in this matter at once the most artistic and the least artificial. Thackeray's laborious trifling over the names of his people is hard to reconcile with the charm of his more usual habit of graceful negligence, and is still more puzzling when viewed in connection with the positive heedlessness which has led him into some strange mistakes, such as the forgetfulness and confusion of his *cognomina*, and the unwitting adoption of real, living, and generally well-known names, some peculiarity in the sound of which has struck his ear. The artificial combination of names in Thackeray's novels clashes with the purpose of truthfulness which is otherwise carried out with consummate and masterly skill. They are so refined, so elaborate, so consciously studied, so manifold, that they daze and weary the attention of the reader who tries to note their sequence. The family names in "The Newcomes," and the other great and smaller works of Thackeray—the Dorkings, Chantcleres, Roosters, and Pulleyns, the Barneses, Kews, and Highgates, the Fitz-Willises and Kingstreets, the MacTurks and Bajazets, the Bareacres and Thistlewoods, and the rest—are so endlessly linked together that we grudge the pains bestowed by art on so much joiner's work. Dickens' names are mostly too farcical; and their want of rhythm or euphony makes them as unpleasing to the tongue as to the ear—like the grating names in "Gulliver's Travels." Mr. Charles Reade and Mr. Anthony Trollope are both very happy in their choice or invention of names, being usually content with such as are characteristic without bearing any special and immediate significance. They are natural names, in short; and they fit, without seeming to have been framed to fit, their wearers.

Names like these are very frequent in reality; names that a novelist could

not improve upon. Bright ! There is a name, in sound and sense, for a great debater ! Its monosyllabic terseness betokens quick intellectual vigour ; its Saxon clearness corresponds with a certain exultant clarion, that has been often heard in opposition to a policy, often too in the ungrudging and independent support of one. Statesmen have, as a fortuitous rule, possessed suitable names. Burleigh's wisdom was of a kind that is reflected in his name ; the names of Pitt, and Fox, and Canning, but the last especially, were applicable. When we think of the etymology of Canning, its Teutonic signification of "able," whence Kœnig, King, the one who *can*—a derivation more than once noted impressively by Mr. Carlyle—we admire the chance that gave such a name to such a man—to the king of his school-mates in the Eton playing grounds, to the young orator sought by a great party as its leader, and to the statesman who, though he lacked—as Sir Henry Bulwer has truly said he did lack—the inflexible will of the dictator who puts his foot on a nation's neck, moved to action and marshalled in resistless force many strong natures. There is a ludicrous relevancy in the loose, flaccid, nerveless, long syllable, Peel, to the oratory of the most solemn of senators. Cobden's was not by any means a thoroughly unmeaning or inapposite name. It had no direct relationship to personal qualities, like that which distinguishes some of the names already cited ; but it has a homely, healthy, kindly, English sound, that harmonises well with grateful memories of the true Englishman who bore it. We can fancy that if he and it had been utterly unknown, and if such an author as George Eliot had been casting about for a name to suit a sturdy but fine nature, clear, truthful, earnest, and downright, we might have made the acquaintance, in life-like fiction, of a plain, modest, quick-witted country gentleman named Cobden.

So we say of that name, Frank Stone. It suits the compact qualities of the painter as well as if he, being an imaginary personage, had been provided with an imaginary name. The mildly fantastic antithesis exactly accords with that careful balance of opposites which is peculiarly characteristic of all Frank Stone's works. So sure as there are two persons on the scene, a young man and a young woman, so sure also do we see two diverse qualities in the painting. There is a simplicity of design which is rather that of plastic art, or sculpture, as witness the figures in this picture of "The First Appeal." They are such as a modeller would fashion, without any thought of invading the domain of pictorial art. They

are the same in attitude even as many other figures by Frank Stone. The young man stands and leans, with his head bent and in profile, exactly as the young lady stands and leans in the picture of "The Heart's Misgiving." He, like her, is in fact *stony*. But to the stoniness comes, with unfailing rectification of the balance, that clear, earnest freedom of thought and expression which we call frankness. And thus, with no violence to matter of fact, we establish a capital instance of that theory or conceit, the proper fitness of proper names.

THE CAVALRY CHARGE.



THIS little hero—a Frenchman, you perceive—looks terribly determined on conquering a continent or two, with that sabre of his ; and we had better get out of his way, while there is yet time to make good a prudent retreat. Slaughter, and glory, and feathers, and red worsted epaulettes ! What a brave son of Mars have we here ! He would lop off our heads, this babe of wrath ; he would trample us under the hoofs of his destrier ; he would leave us food for kites and wolves—

“ In the lost battle,
Borne down by the flying,
Where mingles War’s rattle
With groans of the dying.”

See ! He has overturned his tin waggon, cut down poor Punchinello, and levelled a battery of one pop-gun at a panic-stricken array of martial toys. What will the child do next, if he meet with no check, sustain no reverse, in his pursuit of the vermeil-dyed bubble reputation ?

Shall we do so very much better in lecturing our little ones incessantly about the horrors of war, than in giving them guns and swords for playthings ? There are ways, surely, of teaching “peace-principles,” without denying the valiant qualities, the devotion, the obedience and good-comradeship of the soldier. In all ages the righteous sword, the armour of purity, the shield of faith, the good fight, the warrior without stain as without fear, have been figures most reverentially preserved in our imagination. Are we to discard the lofty symbolism, hallowed by the most sacred associations, endeared by many a noble cause, beautified by art and poetry, sanctified by religion, because we do not see readily how to distinguish between it and the ferocity, frippery, narrow pride, savage punctilio



of false honour, boasting and bloodthirsty libertinism, and violent vanity of camps ? With what deep tenderness and firm affection do we not unite the idea of strife and horrid war ?

“Thy voice is heard 'mid rolling drums
That beat to battle where he stands ;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee ;
The next—like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead, for thine and thee.”

Are there no “peace-principles” here ? Is the “homely scene” conjured up in the face of Death, and in grand forgetfulness of his terrors, a whit less sacred for being seen through the smoke of battle ?

There was once a Cavalry Charge, the profoundly solemn relation of which to all that is tender and beautiful as well as brave in human nature, neither historian nor poet has attempted fully to disclose. Only by indications and guesses, only by appeals to our general sympathy, can a thousandth part of the *homeliness* belonging to that deed of arms be set before us for our speechless admiration. Did one of those men who rode, with flashing sabres, on the 25th of October, 1854, “into the valley of death,” forget some little spot in England at that supreme and awful time ?

On that day, before the Light Brigade followed the angry rider of the “thorough-bred chesnut with the two white legs on the near side,” through a whirlwind of shot and shell, up to the mouths of the Russian battery, another Cavalry Charge was ridden, quite as notable, though less noted. It was General Scarlett's attack, with his 300 Heavy Dragoons, on the whole column of Russian cavalry, reckoned by thousands, that Lord Cardigan's Hussars, Lancers, and Light Dragoons looked down upon, chafing as the leader chafed at their own inactivity. “Greys, gallant Greys !” said Sir Colin Campbell, galloping up to the Heavy Brigade, before it had completed its well-nigh desperate rally ; “Greys, gallant Greys !” said the veteran, uncovering before them ; “I am sixty-one years old, and if I were young again I should be proud to be in your ranks.” The Greys

and Inniskillingers did indeed deserve, that day, the praise sent them by Lord Raglan in a message of but two short words—the two that stamp most honourably the worthiest deeds, whether of peace or war—"Well done." Mr. Kinglake, with his rare advantages of getting at all the true facts, and with rarer powers of putting any facts into pictorial language, has told the story, and has deduced from it at least one great military moral. It seems that when our English dragoons had broken the vast column and put it to flight, and when they themselves had been rallied and re-formed, "they not only disclosed no abounding exultation, but even evinced a sense of disappointment which bordered on anger. The men found that at the close of what seemed to them a life-and-death struggle, the enemy had at last been able to gallop off without sustaining grave loss, and their inference was that they had been fighting almost in vain. *They were mistaken.* Without having wrought a great slaughter or captured a host of prisoners, they had gained so great an ascendant that of all the vast body which is known to have been opposed to them, there was hardly one squadron that afterwards proved willing to keep its ground upon the approach of English cavalry."

And did the Heavy Brigade, after all, inflict so slight a loss upon their outnumbering foes? The killed and wounded among the little band of dragoons were seventy-eight; a grievous total, indeed, seeing that their whole number was barely 300; but the Russians must have suffered, if not in so great a proportion, to a much greater positive degree. According to one of their generals, the whole loss sustained by the Russian troops in the battle was 550; and according to another, their loss in cavalry was great while their loss in infantry was comparatively small. Now, whatever their loss in cavalry may have been, it was a loss almost entirely resulting from their fight with our 300 Scots Greys and Inniskillings.

It was not to his cavalry that Sir Colin—awaiting the movements of an enemy that he knew to be 25,000 strong, and seeing how much depended on the steadfastness of the few hundred soldiers who stood with him on the hillock in front of Kadiköi—spoke those words he could only have spoken to brave hearts: "Remember there is no retreat from here, men! You must die where you stand." It was to his Highlanders of the 93rd Regiment; and they cheerily answered the appeal by saying, "Ay, ay, Sir Colin; we'll do that." But it happened, after all,

that the memorable fighting of that day was with the cavalry; as General Liprandi's statement, that the heaviest losses were sustained by that arm, would of itself indicate.

The emergency by which General Scarlett felt himself compelled to attack the Russian horse, 3,000 strong by Russian official acknowledgment, and stronger by evidence of English and French observers, was one which could only be accepted as an ultimate necessity by a brave man with brave men at his command. Looking up the slope of a hill, those 300 British horsemen saw—what? A column of cavalry, say were it but 2,000, closely massed in oblong or square, and imposing on the mind a sense of threatening weight hardly conceivable by those who never beheld a charge or waited its shock. Presently, at the sound of the trumpet, “this huge mass of horsemen, deep charged with the weight of its thousands, began to descend the hill-side. Making straight for the ground where our scanty 300 were ranging”—we quote the words of Mr. Kinglake—“and being presently brought to the trot, it came on at a well-gathered speed, swelling broader and broader each instant, yet disclosing its depths more and more. In one of its aspects, the descending of this thicket of horsemen was like what may be imagined of a sudden yet natural displacement of the earth's surface, for to those who gazed from afar the dusky mass they saw moving showed acreage rather than numbers.”

British, for good and for ill, is the authentic picture which the historian next draws, of the 300 red-coats forming the first line in the valley beneath, and looking for all the world as if they were on parade. It seems there are certain drill regulations in our army which declare that the troop officers of a regiment shall continue facing their men till the major brings them round by giving the word “Eyes right!” And this is positively how the Scots Greys ceremoniously stood while the Russian column was descending. Scarlett, while the three squadrons behind him went composedly on with the work of dressing and redressing their front, eyed the Russian mass, and felt that the moment might be near when, from the great depth of the column and the incline of the ground, the front ranks of the Russians would have more to dread from the weight of their own troops behind them than from the foe in front; and that, unless the descent of the column should be presently stayed, even the enemy himself might have no choice left but to pour

down like a torrent. Before this moment, however, had come, the Russians slackened pace and came to a halt. It may have been, as Mr. Kinglake surmises, that General Ryjoff was deceived by the deliberately ceremonious preparations of the scanty red squadrons below, and was led by appearances to infer that this apparent sense of security must be based on knowledge of the ground. Or it may have been that, from the first, the enemy had intended to halt at what he judged to be a fit distance.

By a partial deployment the Russian front now extended itself in such a way as that, while two wings or fore-arms were thrown out, right and left, the trunk was still a huge weighty mass of great depth, its two limbs being constituted by a formation in line, capable of being so wielded as to crush all close comers with an easy and pitiless hug.

Up hill, over ground impeded by picket-ropes and other remains of the camp, and against a column whose depth forbade all prospect of shattering it at a blow, the 300 dragoons in English scarlet, strongly contrasting with the grey overcoats which hid the Russian uniform, prepared to charge. And all this, and much more that is told with heedful minuteness by the historian of the Crimea—whose witnesses indeed were those same impatient lookers-on—was beheld by the Light Cavalry, at a distance of not more than 500 yards, some of the men being mounted and others standing, with their chargers beside them, ready at the word of command to spring into their saddles. It was a magnificent piece of soldierly devotion—magnificent, but not war, as the French general said who gazed upon it wonderingly—that the famous Light Brigade performed, after they had seen Scarlett's attack with his 300 Heavy Dragoons, and were ready, "all that were left of them," to perform again. This assertion, by-the-by, is not empty or baseless; for when the remnants of the force which numbered 673 horsemen on going into action, and which came out with a mounted strength of only 195, had formed up, Lord Cardigan addressing them sadly spoke of the exploit as a mad-brained trick and a blunder, but added that it was no fault of his; whereupon they made cheerful answer, "Never mind, my lord, we are ready to go again;" and these words were so plainly earnest that the stiff aristocrat, who with all his faults was "as brave as a lion"—thus testified the relative who did not love him—was obliged to say, "No, no, men! You have done enough." But let us

see now what it was that the Scots Greys and Inniskillings, following General Scarlett as the Light Brigade followed the Earl of Cardigan, did first.

Still inactive, then ; still looking down from the high places of what has been aptly likened to a vast amphitheatre ; and still, perhaps, gathering energy for their part in the spectacle that was to follow the one then enacting—especially for that wild hunt after the hidden quarry that crouched, unseen and at bay, behind the piled-up bank of white smoke pierced by issues of flame, what time the rigidity of their advancing charge should be broken up into racing horsemen by a shrill “Tally ho !” from one of the Light Dragoon officers, who fancied himself in Leicestershire—the “six hundred” saw what we now tell, and what will be told in peaceful homes for many a long, long year to come.

We cannot follow the long, succinct account of Scarlett’s deed of arms, which took far less time to accomplish than to record ; but we can and will rehearse a few of its main incidents. That we are indebted for these, in the thoroughly certified form of their appearance here, to Kinglake’s valuable History, is a fact so patent as to deprive our avowal of any peculiar merit of frankness. At a distance of seventeen years let us glance back at these events. Let us remember the “quiet unobtrusiveness” of the man, which positively for a time prevented his countrymen from acquainting themselves fully with the character of his fight with the main body of the Russian cavalry. Let us see him lead his great charge on the day of the battle of Balaclava.

We have already seen the frowning cloud of Russian cavalry, as it first descended and then paused, gathered, and spread above the slender line of red-coats in the valley. When an officer undertakes a charge of horse, his accustomed hope is that he will be able to shatter the array of the foe by the momentum and impact of his close-serried squadrons, led thundering in at a gallop ; and indeed it is a main part of his reckoning, that the bare dread of the shock he thus threatens will break down all resistance beforehand. For Scarlett there could be no such hope. The scantiness of his numbers was not a fatal bar ; but he had to charge up-hill, over encumbered ground, and against a mass so deep that it could not be shattered by a blow.

To spectators, the suspense must have been horrible—not the less for the singularly clear perception which the means of *colour* afforded them at this crisis.

Most of the Russian horsemen, whether officers or troopers—whether Lancers, Cossacks, or Hussars—were alike enveloped in their outer coats of murky grey; and the grey was of such a hue that, like the grey of many a lake and river, it gathered darkness from quantity; and to the eyes of people looking at it from the heights of the Chersonese, it appeared so black a cloud as to be charged veritably with thunder. The English Dragoons, on the other hand, were in their scarlet uniform: the Greys with their bearskins; the rest with helmets, the plumes of which had been laid aside. Several portions of their accoutrements had also been discarded. They rode without shoulder-scales, without stocks, and without gauntlets. The loss of the stocks was a gain; the absence of gauntlets and the protecting shoulder-scales can hardly be so accounted.

At a distance of five or six horses' lengths, in front of the centre of the Greys, was a group of four horsemen. They were General Scarlett, who wore the same helmet as a regimental officer of Dragoons, and an outer coat of dark blue thrown over his uniform; Lieutenant Alexander Elliot, his aide-de-camp; the general's trumpeter, and his orderly—a stalwart, valorous, and faithful soldier, named Shegog—whose fame as a swordsman had gone forth even before this day's great trial. Of General Scarlett, who rode a grand thoroughbred bay charger, topping any of the steeds that were near, Mr. Kinglake says that "because of a bright contrast between the summer hue of his features and a drooping moustache white as snow," it was possible to recognise him from afar. It is seldom that squadrons are moved from a halt to a charge at a single word of command. When the process is gone through with full deliberation, the first order is, "The line will advance at a walk;" and, the trumpet successively sounding the orders which follow, the force is brought on to its final task through the stages of "Trot!" "Gallop!" "Charge!" The walk, indeed, is most frequently omitted; but the trot, gallop, and charge are *de règle*. Now, Scarlett knew how much all depended on striking at the enemy's masses while yet they stood halted; and, turning to his trumpeter, he said at once, "Sound the charge!"

"Whilst the notes were still pealing"—the passage is so vivid in its closeness of narration that it must be quoted word for word—"and before they could take full effect on the squadrons behind him, Scarlett moved forward at a trot, and although the impediments of the camping-ground made it necessary for a rider, in this the first

part of the onset, to pick his way with some care, yet the horse Scarlett rode was a horse of such stride and power that his rate of advance was not slow, even over the obstructed ground ; and as soon as the clear field, which was at length gained, enabled the leader to get into a gallop, the distance between him and his squadrons was swiftly increased. In a few moments he was so far in advance of them, that Elliot judged it right to call the attention of his chief to the position of his squadrons. Those squadrons were by this time advancing ; but the impediments of the camping-ground proved of course more obstructing to the serried ranks of the Greys than to a horseman with only one companion and two attendants. Scarlett could not question that the distance between him and his squadrons had become extravagantly great ; but, still judging, as he had judged from the first, that it was of vital moment to strike the enemy's column whilst it halted, he rather desired to accelerate the Greys than to retard his own pace. Therefore, still pressing forward, though not quite so swiftly as before, he turned partly round in his saddle, shouted out a 'Come on !' to the Greys, and invoked them with a wave of his sword.

"When the squadrons attained to clear ground, they began to reduce the space that divided them from their leader ; but it is computed that, at the moment of Scarlett's first contact with the enemy's column, the distance between him and the squadrons which followed him was still, at the least, fifty yards.

"The brigadier now found himself nearing the front of the column, at a point very near its centre ; and the spot at which Scarlett then rode was marked by the presence of a Russian officer, who sat erect in his saddle some few paces in front of his people, and confronting the English intruder.

"Scarlett by this time was charging up at high speed, and, conjoined with the swiftness thus attained, the weight of a sixteen-hands horse gave his onset a formidable momentum. The Russian officer turned partly round in his saddle, with a gesture which seemed to indicate that he sought to beckon forward his people, and cause them to flood down over the four coming horsemen ; but already Scarlett and his aide-de-camp were closing. Moved, perhaps, by such indication of rank as was to be gathered in one fleeting moment from the sight of a staff officer's hat, the Russian officer chose Elliot for his adversary, and was going to make his first thrust, when along the other side of him, rushing close past the elbow of his bridle-arm, General Scarlett swept on without hindrance, and drove his way into the column.

“ It was by digging his charger right in between the two nearest troopers before him, that Scarlett wedged himself into the solid mass of the enemy’s squadrons. When a man has done an act of this kind, and has lived to speak of it, it is difficult for him to be sure of what might be happening close around him; but Scarlett observed, that of the adversaries nearest him, there were some who dropped off their horses without having been killed or gravely wounded by him ; and it seemed to him, if he were to judge only by his own eyes, that they were throwing themselves to the ground of their own accord.

“ It was well perhaps, after all, that Scarlett, in leading the charge, was extravagantly ahead of his troops ; for it seems he was able to drive so far into the column, as to be protected by the very bodies of his adversaries from the shock which must needs be inflicted by the Greys and Inniskillings, when charging the front of the column.

“ From the moment when the brigadier had thus established himself in the midst of his foes, it resulted, of course, that his tenure of life was by the sword, and not by the sword which is a metaphor, but by that which is actual, and of steel. Scarlett, it seems, had no pretensions to be more than a passably good swordsman, and he had the disadvantage of being near-sighted ; but he knew how to handle his weapon ; and in circumstances which exposed him to attack from several at the same time, he had more need of such unflagging industry of the sword-arm as might keep the blade flashing here, there, and on all sides in quickly successive whirls, than of the subtle, the delicate skill which prepares men for combats of two.

“ It was partly, perhaps, from the circumstance of Elliot’s approaching him on the side of his sword-arm, that the Russian officer in front of the column chose the aide-de-camp for his antagonist instead of the chief ; but, be that as it may, he faced Elliot as he approached, and endeavoured to cut him down. Evading or parrying the cut, Elliot drove his sword through the body of the assailant, and the swiftness with which he was galloping up whilst delivering this thrust was so great that the blade darted in to the very hilt ; but until the next moment, when Elliot’s charger had rushed past, the weapon, though held fast by its owner, still could not be withdrawn. Thence it resulted that the Russian officer was turned round in his saddle by the leverage of the sword which transfixed him. In the next instant, Elliot, still rushing forward with great impetus, drove into the column between the

two troopers who most nearly confronted him, and then, with a now reeking sword, began cleaving his way through the ranks. Shegog and the trumpeter came crashing in after ; so that not only Scarlett himself, but all the three horsemen that constituted his immediate following, were now engulfed in the column."

Engulfed in it, too, were presently the three hundred, their officers foremost ; Colonel Dalrymple White being the first in, after Brigadier-General Scarlett, his aide-de-camp, and his two attendants. Were they in such desperate condition as to be helplessly perishing in the thicket of lances and swords ? No. From the nettle danger they had plucked the flower safety—"a strange kind of safety," as Mr. Kinglake says of it, truly, but still something not altogether undeserving the name. If, indeed, they had faltered and hovered with uncertain step in the face of the great Russian column till it might please General Ryjoff to sound "the trot," they must have been crushed or scattered by the weight of the descending masses ; but our horsemen, by charging home and forcing their way into the very heart of the column, had, it is true, to fight for their lives, and with an industry which must not be suffered to flag ; but still under conditions not so overwhelmingly unfair as they seemed to be at first sight. They were, to begin, "heavies," and were fighting against hussars and light cavalry of other denominations, over whom they had the advantage, not only of superior weight, but of greater height from the ground, and longer reach for their sword-arms. They were less protected, as we have already observed, than were their foes, most of whom wore the loose grey coarse outer-coat, on which the sabre-edge fell with the dulness of a cudgel. Still it would seem that, putting aside the consideration of unequal numbers, the balance was rather in favour of the English troops ; and the very grossness of the Russian strength, massed as it was on a limited space, prevented General Ryjoff's thousands from shaking off the insulting attack of three hundred horsemen. They did not, in the issue, shake off that attack, or its amazing and unlooked-for effects. Through the column fought the red-coats ; and then, knowing that the Russian army in force awaited them beyond, they turned, singly, to fight their way back again ; and, turning, found that their antagonists had turned too, and were in retreat. By dint of mere personal combats with vastly outnumbering horsemen, this enterprise of Scarlett's scanty squadrons had, contrary to all reason of experience or hope, developed into a victory. The breaking of the Russian column was gradual ; slight

movements were followed by surer signs; the ranks visibly loosened, and in a few seconds the horsemen composing the vast mass had dispersed in an immense herd, and were galloping up the hill-side and retreating the way they had come.

It has been computed that from the moment when General Scarlett began his charge to the one when the Russian mass broke, the time was about eight minutes. In those eight minutes the white-haired leader received five wounds, none of them severe. With his young aide-de-camp, Elliot, it fared harder. By some chance, possibly as a consequence of his wearing a staff-officer's head-gear, he was beset very determinedly by four or five Russians, who addressed themselves with evident resolution to the task of extinguishing the handsome Englishman. At a moment when Elliot had somewhat overreached himself in returning the thrust of a Russian trooper—"a man with a blue-looking nose and a savage, glittering eye"—he received a point in the forehead from his hideous adversary. At the same time, or nearly, another of his assailants divided his face at the centre by a deep-slashing wound, whilst a third dealt a blow on the head which cut through his cocked hat; and then, by the sabre of yet a fourth assailant, he was so heavily struck in the part of the skull behind the ear that, irrespectively of the mere wound inflicted by the edge of the weapon, his brain felt the weight of the blow. In this fight he received no fewer than fourteen sabre-cuts, and the *Gazette* returned him as "slightly wounded." That gash across the face was so skilfully sewn up, that the comely young officer's face in later life has not ceased to be handsome.

Many kind acts were done by Russian officers that day, and many Englishmen in sore straits were rescued from ferocious butchery by those well-bred, highly-trained leaders. Captain Morris, who led the handful of lancers in the light cavalry charge that followed the exploit of the Inniskillings and Scots Greys, owed his life to this chivalry of the modern battle-field. He, like Elliot in the charge of the "heavies," had personally encountered a Russian officer. He, like Elliot, had driven his sword clean through the opponent's body. "I know not how I came to give the point," said Morris afterwards. "It is the last time I ever do so." When his weapon, driven home to the hilt, stuck fast in the dead man's body, the Russian tumbled over on the off-side of his horse, dragging with him the sword that had slain him, and dragging, too, the holder of the sword; for Morris, though he kept his seat, did not relinquish his hold on the weapon to enable him to do so, but

leant down and tugged and tugged amain. The blade must have gone through bone and muscle with the momentum of a horse at high speed. Tethered in this manner to the ground, and powerless to ward off an attack, Captain Morris received a sabre-cut on the left side of the head that carried away a large piece of bone above the ear, and a deep clean cut passing down through the acorn of his forage-cap, which penetrated both plates of the skull. By one or other of these two blows he was felled to the earth, and lay there for a time deprived of all consciousness. It would seem that in the last violent effort of strength preceding utter disability he had withdrawn his sword from the trunk of the Russian officer, and he found it joined to him still by the wrist-knot, when he recovered from his trance. He had hardly recovered his senses and the grip of his sword when he found himself surrounded by Cossacks, thrusting at him with their lances. Against the numbers thus encompassing him, Morris sought to defend himself by the almost ceaseless "moulinet," or circling whirl of his sword, and from time to time he found means to deliver some sabre-cuts upon the thighs of his Cossack assailants. Soon, however, he was pierced in the temple by a lance-point, which splintered up a piece of the bone, and forced it in under the scalp. This wound gave him great pain; and, upon the whole, he thought his life must be near its end; but presently there appeared a Russian officer, who interposed with his sword, striking up two or three of the Cossack lances, and calling out loudly to the Englishman—most likely in the English tongue, for there are few Russians of ordinary culture who do not speak English—to surrender, with assurances that his life would be spared. Morris complied by the surrender of his sword to his generous protector, and became a prisoner of war.

The chivalrous feeling—"the ennobling interruption of man's usual care after self"—the home remembrances, the home tenderness, which would seem to be intensified in gentle natures by strife and extreme peril, did not incline more to one side than the other, in that great battle under the heights of the Chersonese. We read in Mr. Kinglake's great work of knightly magnanimity on both parts—sometimes of the fanciful kind, which pure-souled men who have been nurtured in luxury are apt to feel at times. Thus, one of the princes of the Radziwill family, recognising the Earl of Cardigan, when that nobleman fought for his life behind the Russian guns, as an English peer whom he had met in London, offered a splendid

reward to any Cossack who would capture that tall officer in the stiff hussar pelisse—Lord Cardigan wore his that day not hanging loose but fitting tightly to his body—but, above all, without wounding him or doing him the least injury. Thus, too, when Colonel Dalrymple White was travailing in the thick of the conflict between the three hundred heavy dragoons and the column of Russian cavalry this wayward gentle spirit of self-forgetfulness, this idling of thought when toil and hardship and imminent danger beset the body, came upon him. He was able to spare time, from his labour of death, and care of life, and sense of actual pain—for this gallant gentleman had had his skull laid bare by a Russian sabre, cleaving down home through his dragoon helmet—to observe and to take a sort of interest in what was going on around him. Never mind that these near objects and incidents concerned him or his chance of safety not a jot. It was enough that they were human, and that they touched the sense of home and of days gone by. “He saw a fair-haired Russian lad of seventeen enwrapped like the rest in the coarse heavy overcoat which was common to officers and men; and what seems to have interested him—for he looked with the eyes of a man who cares much for questions of race—was the powerlessness of a levelling costume to disguise the true breed, and the certainty with which, as he thought, he could detect gentle blood under the common grey cloth of a trooper. ‘He looked,’ says Colonel White, ‘like an Eton boy.’ The boy fought with great bravery; but it was well if he had no mother, for before the fight ended he fell, his youthful head cloven in two.”

Our little Frenchman there on the wooden charger shall be allowed to remind us that he and his countrymen have, in its most concentrated spirit, the passion of military glory; and it is hard to say that that passion, extravagant as it sometimes appears in the Gallic race, is without the redeeming kindliness we note in other nationalities, supposed to be in a more generally high degree home-loving. Boyish heroism, of whatever country, must be pardoned the feverish forgetfulness of all save the glory of the battle-field. Still, that the number of boyish heroes of that enthusiastic type is likely to be larger in the French than in any other army, most people whose opinion on the point is worth having will very likely agree. Our most dramatic poet—using the adjective in its wide and true sense—is Robert Browning; and our readers will remember the lines we now quote from an early volume of his poetry; or, if not, will be glad to meet with them now:—

“ You know we French took Ratisbon.

 A mile or so away,

On a little mound, Napoléon

 Stood on our storming-day ”

With neck out-stretched—you fancy how—

 Legs wide, arms locked behind,

As if to balance the prone brow

 Oppressive with its mind.

“ Just as, perhaps, he mused—‘ My plans,

 That soar, to earth may fall,

Let but my army-leader, Lannes,

 Waver at yonder wall,’

From out the battery-smokes there flew

 A rider, bound on bound

Full galloping, nor bridle drew

 Until he reached the mound ;

“ Then off there flung, in silent joy,

 And held himself erect,

By just his horse’s mane, a boy ;

 You hardly could suspect—

So tight he kept his lips comprest,

 Scarce any blood came through,

You looked twice ere you saw his breast

 Was all but shot in two.

“ ‘ Well,’ cried he, ‘ Emperor ! By God’s grace

 We’ve got you Ratisbon !

The Marshal’s in the market-place,

 And you’ll be there anon,

To see your flag-bird flap his vans

 Where I, to heart’s desire,

Perched him.’ The chier’s eye flashed. His plans

 Soared up again like fire.

“ The chief’s eye flashed, but suddenly

 Softened itself, as sheathes

A film the mother eagle’s eye

 When her bruised eaglet breathes.

‘You’re wounded!’ ‘Nay,’ his soldier’s pride
Touched to the quick, he said;
‘I’m killed, Sire!’ And his chief beside,
Smiling the boy fell dead.”

This is a French story, told in a thoroughly French spirit, by a poet whom we are proud to call English. The sentiment he faithfully represents is, we must repeat and maintain, eminently and almost exclusively French. It is, let us venture to add, a sentiment rather military than warlike; and having said as much we may carry our distinction farther, and say that the warlike spirit which belongs to those races who have deeply rooted in their natures the love of home, is much more easily to be reconciled with ideas of peace.

It may seem paradoxical to assert, but we nevertheless assert it faithfully, that the most warlike as distinguished from the merely military peoples of the earth love peace, and, as a consequence, hate war—at least, do not worship war for war’s own sake. Oddly, and still paradoxically, we find the most eloquent condemnations of war in the writings of men who, whether for our amusement or our instruction, have made war their principal theme. In one of the first of the famous letters from the Crimea, in the *Times* newspaper, the rapid historian of events as they followed fast upon events described an open pit which had been dug for a common grave, and which was already half-filled with the slain; and he took for the text of an excellent lay sermon his own sad sketch of a corpse which might have been that of a simple, gallant, foolish country lad, who should have lived to be the prop and pride of a home, and who was lying there, “covered with broidery and blood.” Mr. Russell was, we cannot doubt, too strongly impressed with the natural reflections of the time to have in his mind any conscious recollection of that sermon of Coleridge’s reported by William Hazlitt. “He talked of those who had ‘inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore.’ He made a poetical and pastoral excursion; and to show the fatal effects of war, drew a striking contrast between the simple shepherd boy, driving his team afield, or sitting under the hawthorn, piping to his flock, ‘as though he should never be old,’ and the same poor country lad, crimped, kidnapped, brought into town, made drunk at an ale-house, turned into a wretched drummer-boy, with his hair sticking on end with powder and pomatum”—you see, there were certain peculiarities of military adorn-

ment quite as absurd as the “stiff stock” in Coleridge’s time—“a long cue at his back, and tricked out in the loathsome finery of the profession of blood.” That dashing story-teller, Mr. Charles Lever, whose tales are all of a regimental pattern, has addressed more than one apostrophe to peace, in his admirably pictorial passages descriptive of pastoral scenery. Nay, there is one especial passage, in an early novel of his brilliant row, which distinctly rebukes the combative propensities of the human race on the artistic ground of their tendency to spoil a good landscape.

Mr. Longfellow, the Augustine of nineteenth-century verse, “who sings to one clear harp in divers tones,” has not withheld poetical honours from warlike virtue; but he has also protested very earnestly and sadly against the reckless spilling of blood. His metrical record of a visit to Springfield Arsenal opens with two quatrains remarkable for the originality of a metaphor based on mere outward resemblances :—

“This is the arsenal! From floor to ceiling,
Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms;
But from their silent pipes no anthems pealing
Startle the villages with strange alarms.

“Ah, what a sound shall rise, how wild and dreary,
When the Death-angel touches those swift keys;
What loud lament and dismal *misere*
Shall mingle with their awful symphonies!”

Thackeray, who liked the soldier’s trade no better than did Swift, but whose widely sympathetic temperament, and, above all, admiration of power, enabled him to see the noble side of “glorious war,” has, in his “Chronicle of the Drum,” supplied as wholesome and lasting a satire on warlike ambition and thirst of conquest as Leigh Hunt’s “Captain Sword and Captain Pen :”—

“Perhaps the tale a moral bears
(All tales in time to this must come),
The story of two hundred years
Writ on the parchment of a drum.

“What Peter told with drum and stick,
Is endless theme for poet’s pen :
Is found in endless quartos thick,
Enormous books by learned men.
“And ever since historian writ,
And ever since a bard could sing,
Doth each exalt, with all his wit,
The noble art of murdering.”

The concluding verses of that ballad which our lamented humourist wrote in Paris, at the time of the great Napoleon’s second funeral, in 1841, are well known ; but they have not yet been, and will not soon be, too often repeated :—

“He captured many thousand guns,
He wrote ‘The Great’ before his name ;
And dying, only left his sons
The recollection of his shame.
“Though more than half the world was his,
He died without a rood his own ;
And borrowed from his enemies
Six foot of ground to lie upon.
“He fought a thousand glorious wars,
And more than half the world was his,
And somewhere now, in yonder stars,
Can tell, mayhap, what greatness is.”

The mood in which those lines were written was a finely philosophical mood, as we must all, soldiers or citizens, allow. But Thackeray himself was too good a philosopher to be bound by any theory that could be well founded in such occasional reflections. He knew, and at times boldly and frankly acknowledged, with a certain tribute of respect, the “background of wrath” which Carlyle has declared to be in every man. All the brighter for such a background seem the good deeds that stand out and away from it.



THE LITTLE DRUMMER.



M. DUBASTY'S second picture in our "Homely Scenes" is a fit companion for the first. Without the drum, we suspect, there would be little heart for fighting. The sound of its rat-tattoo is as inspiring to some folk as it is terrible to others.

"I hate that drum's discordant sound,
Parading round and round and round,"

must have been written by a more than commonly irritable poet, moved to rhythmical utterance of anger, perhaps, by his infant son's performance on the sheep-skin. Given, a child to whom has been given a drum, to find the value of peace and quietness!

It must depend very much on a man's mental condition whether the best drumming in the world be to him a pleasing or displeasing noise. If he be trying to solve a mathematical problem, it will affect him disagreeably. If he be troubled with vexatious thoughts that he would fain banish, there may be virtue in that roll or rattle of ebon sticks on tightened parchment to help him. If his head be suffering from some unexplainable cause, he will not be glad to hear the drum. If he be heart-sore, he may, like many a simpleton beside, follow that more or less musical instrument, with an odd feeling that the sound of martial triumph will console him for his defeat in the campaign of love. It was said once, by an experienced surgeon of the United States army—who, in saying it, gave our great Titmarsh material for one of his gravest pieces of philosophical fun—that on inquiring of the captain of his company, he had found that nine-tenths of the men had enlisted and "followed the drum" on account of some love-affair. Nine-tenths! Well, it is a startling statement; but it may very possibly be true.

"Ye Yankee volunteers !
 It makes my bosom bleed
 When I your story read,
 Though oft 'tis told one
 So in both hemispheres]
 The women are untrue,
 And cruel in the New
 As in the Old one !

"What—in this company
 Of sixty sons of Mars,
 Who march 'neath Stripes and Stars,
 With fife and horn,
 Nine-tenths of all we see
 Along the warlike line
 Had but one cause to join
 This Hope Forlorn ?"

To a child of the pugnacious sex, especially if he be a French child, no love-sick promptings are necessary, when the question is put to him whether he would like to be a soldier, and whether his toys shall be peaceful or warlike. Adolphe, here, may live to be a captain of the National Guard, and to hate the *rappel* with a cordiality most thorough and profound. His father is a painter, as you may see by the mahl-stick and another indication or two ; but that is no reason why little Adolphe should not grow up to be a *bourgeois*, and to wear a sword in defence of order and the grocery business. He may be destined to make some noise in the world ; but at present, you see, he is very well pleased to make a noise in the nursery, or in the paternal studio.

Many of us, English as well as French, begin our journey through life with a fondness for sounds and emblems the reverse of peaceable. Many of us, English as well as French, pick up such wisdom on the way as serves at least to make us rather less inclined to jostle other travellers than we were at starting. The Erckmann-Chatrian philosophy—a philosophy of advanced years, sobered passions, ripened judgment, and matured kindliness of worldly observation, the whole infused with a thoroughly Christian spirit—is gaining force in the century now declining towards its end. One of those writers to whom thousands beyond the boundaries

of French soil owe the delight which cannot fail to follow a perusal of the now famous *Romans Nationaux*, tells us, with graphic and impressive simplicity, how deep was the impression made on his childish mind by stories of the wars of Napoleon; and how stronger yet was his perception of the evils of war when he grew to be a man. He shows us himself as quite a little fellow, between his father's knees, behind the great iron stove. His mother and sister are spinning; the wheels hum; his uncle Antoine—the old soldier of the First Empire—walks up and down, his hands crossed behind his back; brother Edward sleeps in a corner; and Jean Baptiste, the eldest, seated near the table, reads, by the light of the little copper lamp, the history of Napoleon the Great. “How I listened!” says the faithful limner of a conscript's life; “how I opened my eyes at the story of those marches, those tremendous battles, those squares beaten in by cavalry; those redoubts taken by assault, those flags captured from the enemy, and those bulletins ringing like trumpets! And when disasters befell—the Russian retreat; Kulm, Dennewitz, Katzbach, Leipzig, the rain, the want of munitions and food, the desertion of allies, all those misfortunes; and, lastly, the invasion—how my poor little heart was wrung! I recollect that, hearing for the first time the narrative of the battle of Waterloo, when my brother, whose voice trembled, cried out the *sauve qui peut*, I burst into such a fit of crying that uncle Antoine said the book must be closed, and my good father had the greatest trouble to console me. It was necessary to promise me that as soon as ever I grew up I should go to fight against the English.”

Well, the historian of that most “Homely Scene” has grown up—up to the estimation of the best critics among those English whom he has no thought of fighting now; whom he loves as well as if no Napoleonic legend had stirred his childish heart against them. “If ever I invade England, as I ardently desire to do,” said he, in a memorable letter, “it will not be to seek a quarrel with you, but to seat myself by your fireside, and to talk with you about human brotherhood. He alone is great who proclaimed *that*, eighteen hundred years ago.”

And our little drummer, who would go to war with a light heart, a clean pinafore, and as much noise as his drum is capable of yielding, may grow up to discard those martial signs and tokens which are now his infantile delight and glory.

THE CHURCH PORCH.



ONE of Mr. Absolon's prettiest bits of old-fashioned rusticity is repeated in the Woodburytype which gives the title to this paper. In the absence of any immediate story to explain the simple scene—if explanation of any kind be needed—we may suppose the young couple whose figures are most prominent in the little group to be husband and wife. That they are in a station of life superior to the humble sphere in which they stand forth somewhat conspicuously, is apparent in the demeanour of all by whom they are surrounded. The old labourer bends his head deferentially; the small boy pulls his forelock as he has been taught to do at the dame-school where “manners” are a spoke in a fore-wheel of the curriculum; and his elder but still little sister retires shyly into the shadow of grandfather's smock-frock. Precedence has, moreover, been given to the young squire and his bride by other members of the congregation; and a lad outside the porch looks over his shoulder at the interesting pair with some expression of curiosity. Mr. Arthur Pendennis, entering on the career of an author, and, having before him the picture of a church porch to fit with verses for an “Annual,” turned an honest five or ten guineas by a half-tender, half-cynical, and wholly charming poem. But he placed his gallant—a young man of lax principles, we fear—outside the gate, solitary, and maundering about the angel within. It is better, though more prosaic, to walk with one's angel arm in arm, especially into church.

She, the modest and demure beauty, so modest and so demure as to be beautiful by another right than symmetry of features, would seem to have been chosen from a rather humble home. Her dress is not so much the dress of society as it might be to match her husband's gallant attire, which is something above



that of a substantial yeoman. None but a gentleman, with horse to ride and weapon to wear—though he has very properly discarded his sword this Sunday morning, and walks to church simply and unostentatiously enough—would wear a laced cravat and carry a handsome cane. We may here fancy some such tale as that of “The Miller’s Daughter :” a tale, not of any excessive levelling of degrees, any extraordinary defiance of social law in match-making, but the simple, everyday history of a happy courtship and marriage, not quite equal, but not violently discrepant. There is scarcely such difference in rank between these two amiable young persons as there was between young Herbert Brooks and the servant-girl in Bloomfield’s rhyme of “The Broken Crutch.” Neither is this prim country-lass a Pamela, whose virtue has been rewarded with a rich house, fine clothes, and a carriage. The history that first commended itself to our notice, indeed, seems still the most fitting one. The young gentleman might, in the opinion of his nearest and kindest of kin, “have looked a little higher ;” but he has made no foolishly romantic choice—has not set himself to play King Cophetua to any beggar-girl.

And as for her, does she not remind you—bating some sixty or seventy years’ difference in the period of dress—of Phœbe Pyncheon, in the charming New England story, which is as popular with lovers of healthy English literature on this side of the Atlantic as on that ? The difficult question as to her being a lady or not can hardly come up for judgment in any fair and generous mind, or, if it comes up, it is in a spirit of calm unconventional speculation. Phœbe, you will please to remember, combined a great many lady-like attributes with other attributes, scarcely fewer, that formed no necessary—or even compatible—part of a lady’s character. She shocked no canon of taste ; was admirably in keeping with herself ; and never jarred against the circumstances in which she might be found. “She was very pretty ; as graceful as a bird, and graceful much in the same way. As pleasant about the house as a gleam of sunshine falling on the floor through a shadow of twinkling leaves, or as a ray of firelight that dances on the wall, while evening is drawing nigh. Instead of discussing her claim to rank among ladies, it would have been preferable to regard Phœbe as the example of feminine grace and availability combined, in a state of society, if there were any such, where ladies did not exist. There it should be woman’s office to move

in the midst of practical affairs, and to gild them all, the very homeliest—were it even the scouring of pots or kettles—with an atmosphere of loveliness and joy.” Have we not met with the same sentiment, more finely though not more faithfully expressed, in a well-known poem by a “Country Parson,” rector of Bemerton, near Salisbury—George Herbert by name?

This is the porch of a village church, hardly creditable to its churchwardens; but we must bear in mind that no Gothic revival had set in at the time depicted by Mr. Absolon. Honest solidity was as much as could be expected of rural restorations in those days; but even the rugged massiveness of this oaken gate of the temple is tumbling into disreputable neglect. As we have said, that was a period by no means strong in religious art. The clergy did not trouble themselves much about the matter; and the laity left it alone. The person most likely to know something about the building in which, one day out of seven, the people of the parish assembled and met together, was the sexton who kept the keys. *He* would tell you which was the oldest portion of the church, and where the masons who made the lancet-windows had stepped in after those who built the round arch; and where in turn those who carved the mullions, and the tracery that flows in circles, and other curving figures, followed. Close intimacy is almost as unerring as instinct; and without knowing how or why, an unlearned man, whose days are passed in keeping watch and ward over some mouldering relic of antiquity, will attain a shrewd analytic knowledge of its progressive history, and the stages of growth that preceded gradual decay.

Small indeed would be the intelligence necessary to discern the comparative modernism of this wooden, worm-eaten porch. It has nothing new about it, certainly; but it is hardly more ancient than a yet weather-proof and serviceable threshing-barn might be. There is no reverential quality to speak of—unless a high-panelled family pew be reverential—the two excrescences, within and without, being obviously of the same age in the recent annals of the building. Both were added to the church itself—the real solid fabric—at a period of other strange overgrowths, which could not, however, choke the glorious trunk, or “suck the verdure out of ’t.”

Well, through that porch it was, most likely, that the brave young gentleman who now looks lovingly in his wife’s eyes led her proudly forth, a bride.

He may look at it with less critical vision than ours, for her sake, and in memory of their wedding-day. And after they shall have passed, many hundreds of times, in and out thereat, when the high-panelled pew has become too small for their growing family, he may look again in those eyes of hers, and speak hopefully of the autumn of life that is to come :—

“ *You* in your girls again be courted ;
And *I* go wooing with my boys !”

ABUNDANCE.



ALLEGORY is out of fashion, but we may find in this decidedly allegorical picture by the conscientious Belgian painter, Van Eycken, many qualities to admire; especially if, with imagination to help us, we see beyond the merits of the composition as they are disclosed in the print, to the fine colouring for which the artist—an enthusiastic disciple of the Umbrian school—was famous. We must fancy the brilliant blue of the sky, the rich purple bloom on the grapes, the golden ears of corn, the red blush of the roses, the fine flesh tints of the living group, and the lustrous black hair of the mother who bends over her sleeping babes. They are twin fruit, we must observe, as a necessary development of the artist's idea. The young mother is, almost too literally, "blessed in her basket and her store." Vineyard, cornfield, and garden have been prodigal in their gifts; and she, too, is a fruitful field. It is altogether a very pretty picture of plenty.

Do you know, reader of these informal pages, what may be the reverse of plenty? That is, have you any personal and actual knowledge of hunger; of what we call—using a very ill-shapen word, which was coined in the House of Commons, and has been carefully kept out of every good dictionary, from Johnson to Webster—"starvation?" No doubt you have felt "dreadfully hungry" at times, and have sat down to lunch or dinner with an appetite worth an alderman's ransom. No doubt, too, in these scientific days, you have a tolerably good theoretical knowledge of the subject. You have, at least, read Professor Bain's remarks, and the popular expositions in Mr. Lewes's physiological handbooks; and you know for a fact that it is wrong to play tricks with those secretions which are called "gastric juices." You know that the blood of a



man slain by famine shows, under microscopic examination, very few of those discs which compose the nutritive solids; you know that in place of such discs, which ought to be plentiful, appear certain husks of destroyed tissues—mere “bad debts” or forfeited securities of nature. All this, and more, you may know theoretically concerning hunger; but against any close practical acquaintance with that sensation the family tradespeople have, in all likelihood, drawn a comfortable cordon of weekly accounts.

If, wrecked in friendship, heart, and hope; if with hard Fortune left to cope; borne down beneath her turning-wheel—exposed “to feel what wretches feel”—you yet should know the weary pain that vexes while it dulls the brain, the sickly craving which forbids rest to the red unclosing lids, rest to the fierce and haggard eyes, to quench whose flame no tear will rise—the failing step and wasted limb—the sense of manhood growing dim, as wolfish instinct keener grows—the faintness that is not repose, but waking fever, wild as weak; the sallow skin, the sunken cheek—your trembling tongue at last may tell what hunger is, too well, too well!

There is an old Norwegian legend—it may be common to several countries, but we find it classed, in a careful collection, under the head of Norway—which is very much to our present purpose. A peasant-boy, who was hungry enough to look very pale and sad, though not perhaps in such extremity of inanition as we have asked you to fancy, sat by the side of a wood, longing for the supper which was remote, if not problematical. By came a Brown Dwarf—one of the Brown Dwarfs of Scandinavian fairy-lore, but looking more like an ordinary mortal, we may suppose, than it was quite natural for him to look; and this Brown Dwarf, who carried a large, loose, and seemingly empty wallet or bag, came close up to the lad, and gave him the customary salutation, “Good day.” It may be here remarked that the legendary Brown Dwarfs of Scandinavia bear on the whole a good character for elfish benevolence. Any sort of distress has a claim on their good offices; and, as it is the wont of most liberal natures to be gay and even playful, the Brown Dwarfs very often made a joke of their manner of giving. You will admit this to be no bad trait, even when carried to the verge of eccentricity. That kindness and fun should now and then go together is quite permissible; and the

acquaintance of a practical joker whose pranks are all in the form of little useful services, or important benefactions, is not an acquaintance you would think of decrying to your friends or denying to your son.

"What is the matter?" asked the Brown Dwarf, seeing plainly enough that something troubled the boy's heart, or the region near it.

"I'm *so* hungry!" was the lad's answer.

"Indeed!" said the Dwarf. "Now, do you know, I often wonder why people *will* be hungry. How easy it is to carry a bag like this!—light, you see, and exceedingly portable, but containing everything you can possibly desire to eat and to drink. Yes, here you have the flesh of all creatures that run, walk, swim, or fly, prepared with the greatest skill that a fastidious palate could require. You have only to choose, and here it is, ready and perfect. Dainty white bread, too; none of your black abomination! And such wine. That's the sort of pack you should always carry with you, my young friend. Would you like to take a peep inside?"

You may guess that a hungry peasant, not perhaps endowed with much good-humour, would hardly relish a joke of this kind; and truly the boy was somewhat inclined to resent a piece of cruel impertinence. For what else could he consider it? Still, with a lingering hope that there might be some trifle lurking in a corner of the Dwarf's wallet, and that the Dwarf was really willing to divide that trifle, were it only a stale crust, he gave an eager glance down to the bottom. But, alas! the bag was empty.

Not waiting till the resentment of the boy could express itself in words or action, the Brown Dwarf said earnestly—

"Come, come! I was jesting, and not jesting. Dip your hand in my lucky-bag, and I assure you that you will bring out a prize."

So the boy did dip in his hand, and, to his unutterable wonderment, laid hold of a venison pasty. There were also, when he tried again, some little loaves and a very palatable cheese; and there was a flask of delicious red wine, and a silver-rimmed horn to drink it out of. In short, the boy made such a meal as he had not caten for a very long day, and the pallor of his cheeks gave way to a flush of thankfulness and satiety.

"Keep the wallet," said the Brown Dwarf, when the boy had made an

end of eating, and had stammered out his gratitude. "Keep it, and use it wisely and kindly. Do not forget that it was a boon you could not have expected, and had not earned. Do not disregard the wants of others. Be grateful, and you will never be greedy."

The counsel was better than the gift. From that day the peasant-lad wanted nothing. He grew fat on fillets of fawn, larded cygnets, luscious fruits, and fair wheaten bread. He grew idle, of course; for what need was there that he should work? Did he remember the Brown Dwarf's precept? We shall presently see.

Again he sat, no longer pale and hungry, in that very place by the wood-side. And now, with feeble steps, an old, old man, miserably clad, approached him, leaning on a stick, and seeming to prepare the way for speech by meek supplicatory glances. When he had come quite near to the stump of a tree on which the boy was sitting, he said—

"Good youth, for mercy's sake and the love of Heaven, bestow a morsel of your food on a poor wandering old man, who almost faints with hunger."

"Oh, dear me!" said the churl petulantly, "I'm always feeding hungry people. It's very tiresome work. They seem to find me out, somehow, whenever I want to be quiet and enjoy myself by myself. I really can't give you anything to-day. There! If that's not plain enough, I shan't."

From that moment the wallet ceased to yield bite or sup!

The sky is dark, the air very chill, the trees are bare, and the birds are songless. Winter has come! Swart Labour, pinched and gaunt and sad, stalks grimly by our frost-curtained window. The shadows fall in spectral shapes. Hunger is king!

Let there be no thought of dragging down the tyrant, of slaying him with his iron crown, and of setting up soft Plenty in his stead. It is not in our power to work this foolish ill. Where easy Nature, unwooed, yields "abundance," there is sloth, there is selfishness, there is ingratitude. The naked savage does not, for he need not, till the ground. He feeds with a beast's instinct, or less, for he will not even store. No lesson comes to him of labour, and thrift, and helpful bounty

THE BABES IN THE WOOD.



THERE is not much genuine poetry in that Norfolk ballad which sets forth the wickedness of a cruel and rapacious guardian, and the tragical death of his little nephew and niece ; it will not bear comparison with the least inspired of a score of ballads that might be gathered at random from Ritson, Percy, or Bell. The immeasurably less popular and infinitely more imaginative “Edward, Edward” and “Sir Patrick Spence,” are each worth a wilderness of little Norwich lostlings. And “The Nut-brown Maid !” Where is the poem, for home use, that can beat that well-woven, well-wearing fabric ? It is a little out of fashion, for awhile, perhaps ; but like all good and durable things it can bide its time of popular favour. We live in a period of much artifice and little art ; and we entertain marvellously strange ideas of the common and vulgar. Think of the æsthetic condition of an age that imagines a sort of comic vulgarity in the sun-flower !

But the ballad of “The Babes in the Wood” is an excellent ballad in its degree, comparisons being admittedly odious. “There’s an art in pies—in raising crusts as well as galleries.” The story, in its original form of quaint verse, is at all events vastly above all its modern modifications, in merit of every kind. It is more skilfully constructed and more capably finished. No rising young taste can be injured by those honest unaffected rhymes. Coarse burlesque, at once sophisticate and barbarous, has done its cruellest and silliest to spoil this homespun legend, as it has spoilt, for a time, many a thing of worth ; but we can still lead the youngsters back to the simple tale without much fear lest they will have been taught to scoff drearily at that which we accepted in pure nursery-faith, when pathos and ghastly spasmodic buffoonery were kept at three paces’ distance.



We cannot avoid a certain feeling of regret that Mr. Peele, whose own story is not without serious interest, should have suffered himself to lose sight of the circumstances which essentially belong to the Norfolk chronicle. No doubt the narrative is founded in fact; but even were it not so, the integrity of a mere work of fiction should be respected. The pair of chubby young cottagers who are here sleeping what does not by any means seem to be their last sleep, but rather a healthy nap consequent on the fatigues of blackberrying, are very unlike the ideal babes who were covered with leaves by compassionate red-breasts. How does history speak on the point? The children's parents, dying nearly at one time, leave their tender offspring to the care of an uncle, and too trustingly provide that, in case those helpless little ones should also die, the wealth they would have inherited shall be his. We all remember how, with superfluous villany, the avaricious relation appointed two murderers instead of one to rid him of his troublesome charge, and thus to remove the bar to his possession of their estates. The rogues fell out, and the more compunctious of the pair got the best of a mortal struggle. He not only left his antagonist dead on the field, however, but abandoned the babes to a slower death by exposure and famine. Such are the main incidents of the ballad; and Mr. Peele has sadly slighted them, in an otherwise meritorious picture. He has given us two children of a much lower grade than that of the little ones in the Norfolk ballad. They do not seem at all likely to be lost in a wood, to which indeed they must be pretty well accustomed at a time of the year when "leaves are green and nuts are brown." Instead of the rich clothes torn by brambles, we see a poor peasant garb tattered by wear. Then, again, the wood is not sufficiently wild, dense, desolate, *iners, penetrabile nullo astro*. A child might easily enough see his way out of it.

Nevertheless, Mr. Peele's picture may be looked at many times with satisfaction for its own sake, and perhaps, too, for the sake of that personal story to which we have already made passing reference. The artist is a somewhat singular example of patient merit finding its own way out of a wood penetrated, indeed, by no star of guidance or hope. He had no early instruction in art, or inducement to instruct himself. On the contrary, his natural gift was checked and discouraged in every way. Mr. John Thomas Peele was born at Peterborough in 1822; and to be born at Peterborough in 1822 was a less favourable fate for

a pictorial genius than it might be for him to come into the world fifty years later, and in some other locality. It is no wonder that, being born at Peterborough in 1822, Mr. Peele never saw an oil-painting, or any considerable work of art, till he left Peterborough with his family, and went to live at Buffalo, on the borders of Lake Erie, through which runs the boundary-line separating Canada from the United States. Buffalo being as little noted for the cultivation of the liberal arts as Peterborough itself—we speak now of a time when schools of design were not so common as they are in the present day—and Mr. Peele's father being one of those persons who regard painting as a "low pursuit," it would follow that the art-prospects of John Thomas were not much brighter when he was twelve or fourteen years old—at which time the Peele family emigrated—than when he was a little child at home in Northamptonshire.

But an itinerant painter of portraits came to Buffalo, and set up his temporary studio there; and to that studio the boy got access. Whatever may have been the quality of the work he saw there, it had the merit at all events of determining young Peele's career. For the first time in his life he saw pictures that had been painted, or were in course of being painted, in oil; and perhaps, while sufficing to rouse the spirit of emulation, they were not of such excellence as to be in danger of daunting it.

The repugnance of the elder Peele to art seemed to present a more formidable obstacle to his son's chosen career than any technical difficulties which were then apparent. Threats of ejection from home might or might not have had their terrors; but the refusal of money wherewith to buy materials would have put an absolute stop to the lad's projects, had he not bethought him of the expedient of begging a few dry colours and a little oil from a house-painter. He made a palette of the lid of a cigar-box, and with these appliances and a few old brushes set to work on portraits of his brother and sister. When, after some lapse of time, he had made such progress that he could venture to receive sitters, for a small payment, the father's objections began to give way. At length, taking a really liberal view of his son's chosen calling, he furnished him with the means of study at New York. Here John Thomas Peele remained for eighteen months—not greatly to his advantage, for although at Buffalo he could only teach himself with the help of Nature's book, in New York he was exposed to the danger of

imitation, without any very good models to imitate. He came from New York to England, counting on patronage that did not await him; and after three years of unrequited toil in this country, he returned to America. Having gradually abandoned portraiture, and planned for himself a field of labour in which he has since excelled, Mr. Peele was elected a member of the National Academy of Design, and enjoyed the friendship of the most distinguished American artists. At the end of seven years, he again came to England, and settled permanently in his native country.

This picture of "The Babes in the Wood"—which, after all, may only have been capriciously so named, with little or no relation to the old Norfolk ballad—was exhibited, a good round number of years ago, at the Suffolk Street Exhibition of the Society of British Artists, and was bought by Prince Albert. It is now in the collection at Osborne.

PRAYER.



IN this picture of lordly piety—Mr. Sant's infant models were two children of the Duke of Argyll—there is a feeling as simple as might throw a hallowed light on any "Homely Scene" where infants have been taught to pray. To be so taught is a vital requirement; for though we may be sure that religion is a human instinct, the habit of worshipping God in spirit and in truth, of seeking Him with the heart's language of supplication, thanksgiving, and praise, does not readily come to us in childhood. There is an almost painful passage in one of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poems, in which the childish capacity for prayer seems even to be denied. To feel the presence, to be conscious of the power of the "Great First Cause, least understood," is natural to every child; but such innate knowledge is insufficient :

"For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?"

Beautiful are the prayers and hymns that have been written for children by poets of all shades of religion, these great men being the readiest to cast aside their manly subtleties, refinements, exilities, and involutions of thought, and to look out from their spiritual depth "with the eyes and the heart of a child." The good Bishop Heber, whom Thackeray quotes with an admiration scarcely less than that which he yields to Addison himself, was one of these; and various have been the men of more splendid genius, from Milton to Coleridge, who have been careful to simplify their theology for the behoof of children.

A dramatic poet of the last generation, at whose fame, solid and brilliant as it



is, there was a half-popular custom of sneering, when stage-taste had entered on a notable change, did much to encourage the training of the young in love and fear of God. It will be remembered that Sheridan Knowles formally abjured his vocation of a writer for the theatre, while the theatre was still supposed in some sort to be a temple of art. But long before that conversion of his—conversion whole and utter he deemed it to be—that excellent playwright had shown, even in his temporal, or, as he would afterwards have said, profane, works of invention, a devoutly and simply religious mind. In his play of *William Tell* there occurs this remarkable passage, in a scene between the patriot's wife and her boy :—

Emma : Knelt you this morn ?

Albert : I did ; as every morn.

Emma : And thought you, when you knelt, to Whom you knelt ?

Albert : To Him who made me, mother.

Emma : And in Whose name ?

Albert : In His who died that I and all mankind
Might live.

Emma : That's well, my son !

“Out of place on the stage,” says my Lord Chamberlain. Truly, yes ; any time these two hundred and fifty years ! Out of place now more shockingly than at any period, not excepting that of the Restoration of His Most Religious and Gracious Majesty Charles the Second. The time has come once again, for better or worse, when a very broad margin indeed must be drawn between our most refined amusements and any idea that bears the smallest relevancy to our Faith.

The picture of the Duke of Argyll's children at evening prayer is one of the painter's most deservedly celebrated works. Mr. Sant paints young heads wonderfully, not forgetting to place them on young shoulders, with young bodies and limbs beneath them equally life-like. The roundness of the flesh is a peculiarly meritorious characteristic of this distinguished artist's work, and it is here as noteworthy as in any of his paintings. The light about the faces and their beatific expression remind us of the painter's “Infant Samuel.”

DORCAS.



It was not, be sure, in mere wilfulness, or amiable perversity of reasoning, that Charles Lamb made his "Complaint of the Decay of Beggars in the Metropolis." There is much in the essay, no doubt, that is fancifully and humorously insincere. The whole argument is exaggerated, with plain purpose to surprise and puzzle the reader ; but all is not paradox, nor rebellious and defiant whim. Elia could not but be in earnest when he advised his reader not to be frightened at the hard words "imposition," "imposture," but to "give, and ask no questions." Against painted distress, rank though the deceit might be, no purse-strings would he have had drawn close. "Act a charity sometimes. When a poor creature (outwardly and visibly such) comes before thee, do not stay to inquire whether the seven small children, in whose name he implores thy assistance, have a veritable existence. Rake not into the bowels of truth to save a halfpenny. It is good to believe him. If he be not all that he pretendeth, *give*, and under a personate father of a family, think (if thou pleasest) that thou hast relieved an indigent bachelor. When they come with their counterfeit looks, and mumping tones, think them players. You pay your money to see a comedian feign these things, which, concerning these poor people, thou canst not certainly tell whether they are feigned or not."

The beggar is, or was, to charity what the priest is to faith. A priest untrue to his holy office can only discredit himself. We believe none the less for his being a hypocrite. So, too, it might be said of the beggar, his falsehood be on his own head, not on the account of our charity.

"Much good," says Lamb, with inimitable quaintness, "might be sucked from beggars." He speaks of mendicancy as the oldest and honourablest form



of pauperism, its appeals being to our common nature; less revolting to an ingenuous mind than to be a suppliant to the particular humours and caprice of any fellow-creature, or set of fellow-creatures, parochial or societarian. Even in his day the all-sweeping besom of reformation had been applied to "the fluttering tatters of the bugbear Mendicity;" and "from the crowded crossing, from the corners of streets and turnings of alleys, the parting genius of beggary was 'with sighing sent.'" He disapproved of this wholesale going to work, this impertinent crusado, or *bellum ad exterminationem*, proclaimed against a species. "There was a dignity springing from the very depth of their desolation; as to be naked is so much the nearer to the being a man, than to go in livery."

If anything could drive us into accepting, as sober, practical earnest, Lamb's humorous plea for street-beggarhood, it would be the grave dehortations from open and indiscriminate almsgiving which are from time to time commended by dull respectability to its own approving spirit. It is foolish and wicked, we are told, to give without inquiry into the desert of those who solicit our gifts. We are encouraging idleness, bestowing a premium on imposture. Our pity for the poor, which we have been taught to consider as a lending to the Lord, must take the form of recommendations to some benevolent society, or to the relieving officer. Otherwise it is a loan we had better have withheld. Our bread must *not* be cast upon the waters. Angels shall *not* be entertained unawares.

Away with this formal, chilly method of mercy! Shall Belisarius be sent for his obolus to Bumble? Must "the least of these"—the least worthy, it may be, but not the least necessitous, the least truthful but not the least suffering—be fed with an order of relief and clothed with a mendicity ticket? Shall no privacy of good deeds be allowed? Is the left hand to be kept continually informed of what the right hand is doing, in order that nothing in the way of charity shall be done against parochial rule?

Good works and alms-deeds—these are for ever identified with "a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas," who made garments for the widows in Joppa, and was full of that godliness which is prompt to action. Hers was the true practical Christianity which the Apostle enjoins on all who follow the Cross. To women especially does Paul commend good

works; and it is of the compassionate Dorcas that we now think as the first of the "Sisters of Charity."

Alms—the simple word runs strangely through all languages in which the religion of Jesus has been taught. In Saxon, in old English, in Norman, in ancient and modern French, in Dutch and Belgic, in Swedish, in Danish, and in German, as in Greek and Latin, the mere etymology of this Christian expression is the same. *Elcemosyna*, *almosen*, *aumônes*, or *alms*—in all Christian countries, and in every age of Christianity, we hear the sound which had its literal origin in a Greek verb signifying "to pity." There are few words that have been so widely spread as this, by the instrumentality of the New Testament; and it is not by any means beautiful to think that its universality of sound and sense will ever be sapped by an economic theory.

Should that drear day ever come, such pictures as this by one of our most esteemed English painters will adorn no tale, will point no moral. Rubens shall have painted for no higher purposes than the study of colour and the curious perpetuation of a foolish old story, the picture of St. Martin dividing his cloak with a beggar. But, no. The doctrines which oppose good works and alms-deeds, as "tending to pauperise the object," will be powerless while there are hearts to pity and brains to think.



FIRST LOVE.



THIS title, following a paper at the head of which it might have stood, leads us nevertheless to brief contemplation of a different theme. The first love depicted by M. Perrault is not exactly of that kind which in war mounts the battle-horse, and in peace tunes the shepherd's reed—which is seen in gay attire in hall, or dances with rustics on the green ; which, in fact, “rules the court, the camp, the grove, and men below and saints above.” Unless the young gentleman in scanty clothing should chance to get a scratch from the object of his affections—and that is not altogether unlikely, seeing that a cat, whose temper has quite enough to bear, in the troubles and anxiety of maternity, does not much like being hugged—his feelings consequent upon this tender *lête-à-lête* will hardly be “wild with all regret.”

Are children cruellest when they are cruel to animals, or when they are kind ? Ask that cat. If she were free to use her nimble feet, and were chevied by her fond tormentor, she might run up a tree, and stay there above the reach of pebbles till his patience wore out. As it is, she must endure his caresses, because there is no way of escaping them.

Suppose she were a guinea-pig, a gold-fish, a rabbit, a lizard, or a tame jackdaw, would her lot be happier ? Scarcely. All the creatures we have named are domestic martyrs. A guinea-pig, having no more neck than a lobster, cannot be throttled, and he enjoys a second important exemption—that is, from being lifted by his tail, nature having considerably relieved him of that undesirable handle. On the whole he is a compact, spherical animal, fitting well into the hollow of the human hand, and able to draw his exceedingly small limbs out of harm's way ; so that his bondage to boyhood is a destiny less terrible than

that of other pets. The gold-fish, at the best, is simply killed by slow hunger. There exists a delightful notion that this ichthyological wonder does not want anything to eat, but that his natural requirements are best served by the glass globe in which he is confined being kept very clear and transparent, and the water being changed every day. It takes rather longer to starve a gold-fish than it would to destroy human life by the same process, but the end is quite as certain in the one case as in the other. As it must be excessively tedious, however, to the gold-fish to be slowly starved, a gentle sort of amusement is afforded him by the illusory clearness of the glass globe, against which he knocks his nose a thousand times a day, with ever-new surprise to find himself hit in the face, as it were, by nothing. That a rabbit does not mind being caught up by his ears, is a one-sided opinion which might possibly be confuted if rabbits could talk; but as they cannot, there is an end of the business. Lizards and jackdaws, in their several ways, are victims of juvenile fondling; but they, too, are uncomplaining; and it is not likely or, perhaps, desirable, that a Society for the Prevention of Kindness to Animals should be formed on their account.



THE VILLAGE ROSE.



OPEN any "common-place book" at the letter L, and if you do not find at least twice as many pages apportioned to Love as to any other human entity honoured with a place in that alphabetical department of the volume, it will be for you to decide whether or not the compiler is a common-place person. Liberty, Light, Learning, Laughter, Law, Logic, Life, and Limited Liability all demand some share of our attention, whether they get that share duly or not; but as for Love, it will be denied no jot of its claim.

To the youth in this charming sylvan scene, painted by Mr. Brooks four-and-twenty years ago, love has happened, most indubitably; nor is there any question that the flame burns with equal strength on both sides. It is first love, likely enough; there is such earnestness in the lad's appealing gaze, such trustfulness in the look that, modestly avoiding his, yields nevertheless the wished-for reply, that you can no more doubt the freshness of their feelings than that of the rose they are holding between them.

"'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all,"

says Tennyson, and the same thought is expressed by Lord Houghton, in eight lines instead of two. They are eight very musical lines, to be sure; *ecce signum* :—

"He who for love hath undergone
The worst that can befall
Is happier thousand-fold than one
Who never loved at all;

A grace within his soul hath reigned
Which nothing else can bring—
Thank God for all that I have gained
By that high suffering !”

First love, as we should guess sensibly enough—though the conclusion is quite opposed to all romantic fancies, miscalled ideas, on the subject in question—is not necessarily the most intense or the most enduring, though it is very likely to be both. Somebody has said that the boy falls in love with the first woman who treats him as if he were a man. This is one of those clever sayings which have enough of truth in them to make them pass for true. Granting, however, that the assertion were wholly truthful, nobody in accepting it would allow that the boy’s love, so begotten, could live. If *Rosalind* had not behaved so scornfully to her boy-lover, *Romeo*, if she had seen fit to encourage his passion, would he have been constant to her after seeing *Juliet* ?

But *Romeo* was an exceptional youth, even among the youths of Italy ; and it may be questioned whether, had all gone smoothly in his wooing of the fair *Capulet*, he might not have found yet another goddess to adore. There is little doubt that a first love, though followed by a deeper and more lasting devotion, hangs about a man through life, comes back to him dimly or even with a certain vividness at times, strikes him with sadness in the midst of mirth, and dams up the current of speech with sudden silence. A poet, truly entitled to the name, made his earliest reputation by love-poems fiery enough, perhaps too fiery. But later in his life, and not long before his death, he—it is of *Alexander Smith* we are speaking—wrote in a calmer, sadder, more philosophical, but certainly not less poetic strain. His poem “*The Night Before the Wedding ; or, Ten Years After*” is so wonderfully like *Tennyson* in thought and manner, that it might easily pass for the work of the Laureate. But *Alexander Smith* was no imitator. The truth is, he was so veracious that he abhorred even the affectation of being singular, or very strikingly original. He admired *Tennyson* greatly, and would not be at the dishonest pains of attempting to conceal the accidental likeness of his own verse to that of the more famous poet. Here is the *Tennysonian* poem by *Alexander Smith*, the remembrance of which has been suggested here by our parenthetical disquisition on first and second love :—

“The country ways are full of mire,
The boughs toss in the fading light,
The winds blow out the sunset's fire,
And sudden droppeth down the night.
I sit in this familiar room,
Where mud-splashed hunting-squires resort,
My sole companion in the gloom
This slowly dying pint of port.

“’Mong all the joys my soul hath known,
’Mong errors over which it grieves,
I sit at this dark hour alone,
Like Autumn ’mid his withered leaves.
This is a night of wild farewells
To all the past, the good, the fair ;
To-morrow, and my wedding bells
Will make a music in the air.

“Like a wet fisher, tempest-tost,
Who sees throughout the weltering night
Afar on some low-lying coast
The streaming of a rainy light,
I saw this hour—and now ’tis come ;
The rooms are lit, the feast is set ;
Within the twilight I am dumb,
My heart fill’d with a vague regret.

“I cannot say in Eastern style,
Where’er she treads the pansy blows ;
Nor call her eyes twin-stars, her smile
A sunbeam, and her mouth a rose.
Nor can I, as your bridegrooms do,
Talk of my raptures. Oh, how sore
The fond romance of twenty-two
Is parodied ere thirty-four !

“To-night I shake hands with the past—
Familiar years, adieu, adieu !
An unknown door is open cast,
An empty future wide and new

Stands waiting. O ye naked rooms,
 Void, desolate, without a charm,
 Will Love's smile chase your lonely glooms,
 And drape your walls and make them warm ?

"The man who knew, while he was young,
 Some soft and soul-subduing air,
 Melts when again he hears it sung,
 Although 'tis only half as fair.
 So love I thee, and love is sweet
 (My Florence, 'tis the cruel truth),
 Because it can to age repeat
 That long-lost passion of my youth.

"Oh, often did my spirit melt,
 Blurred letters, o'er your artless rhymes !
 Fair tress, in which the sunshine dwelt,
 I've kissed thee many a million times !
 And now 'tis done. My passionate tears,
 Mad pleadings with an iron fate,
 And all the sweetness of my years
 Are blackened ashes in the grate.

"Then ring in the wind, my wedding chimes ;
 Smile, villagers, at every door ;
 Old churchyard, stuff'd with buried crimes,
 Be clad in sunshine o'er and o'er ;
 And youthful maidens, white and sweet,
 Scatter your blossoms far and wide ;
 And with a bridal chorus greet
 This happy bridegroom and his bride.

" 'This happy bridegroom !' There is sin
 At bottom of my thankless mood :
 What if desert alone could win
 For me life's chiefest grace and good ?
 Love gives itself ; and if not given,
 No genius, beauty, state, or wit,
 No gold of earth, no gem of heaven
 Is rich enough to purchase it.

- “It may be, Florence, loving thee,
My heart will its old memories keep,
Like some worn sea-shell from the sea,
Fill'd with the music of the deep.
And you may watch, on nights of rain,
A shadow on my brow encroach ;
Be startled by my sudden pain,
And tenderness of self-reproach.
- “It may be that your loving wiles
Will call a sigh from far-off years ;
It may be that your happiest smiles
Will brim my eyes with hopeless tears ;
It may be that my sleeping breath
Will shake, with painful visions wrung ;
And, in the awful trance of death,
A stranger's name be on my tongue.
- “Ye phantoms, born of bitter blood,
Ye ghosts of passion, lean and worn,
Ye terrors of a lonely mood,
What do you here on a wedding morn ?
For, as the dawning sweet and fast
Through all the heaven spreads and flows,
Within life's discord rude and vast,
Love's subtle music grows and grows.
- “And lighten'd is the heavy curse,
And clearer is the weary road ;
The very worm the sea-weeds nurse
Is cared for by the Eternal God.
My love, pale blossom of the snow,
Has pierced earth, wet with wintry showers—
O may it drink the sun, and blow,
And be follow'd by all the year of flowers !
- “Black Bayard from the stable bring ;
The rain is o'er, the wind is down,
Round stirring farms the birds will sing,
The dawn stand in the sleeping town,

Within an hour. This is her gate,
Her sodden roses droop in night,
And—emblem of my happy fate—
In one dear window there is light.

“The dawn is oozing pale and cold
Through the damp east for many a mile ;
When half my tale of life is told
Grim-featured Time begins to smile.
Last star of night that lingerest yet
In that long rift of rainy grey,
Gather your wasted splendours, set,
And die into my wedding-day.”



THE WRITING LESSON.



DEAR Reader, are you a *mere* reader? Because if you are, you are—what? Well, according to the Rev. Sydney Smith—whose wisdom was rather apt to be decried by his clerical contemporaries as “worldly,” though the world would, perhaps, not be worse for a good deal more of it—you are the idlest of human beings. To be a mere writer is something worse. Let the art ever remain to you, if it still is, a *difficulty*. “Thanks to Saint Bridget,” said the Douglas, “son of mine, save Gawain, never penned a line!” And listen to one of the subtlest of your real writing men—to the great thinker, William Hazlitt. “I sat down to the task,” says he, “for the twentieth time”—the task in question being the statement of a fancied discovery touching the Natural Disinterestedness of the Human Mind—“got new pens and paper, determined to make a clear work of it, wrote a few meagre sentences in the skeleton style of a mathematical demonstration, stopped half-way down the second page, and, after trying in vain to pump up any words, images, notions, apprehensions, facts, or observations, from that gulf of abstraction in which I had plunged myself for four or five years preceding, gave up the attempt as labour in vain, and shed tears of helpless despondency on the blank unfinished paper. I can write fast enough now. Am I better than I was then? Oh, no! One truth discovered, one pang of regret at not being able to express it, is better than all the fluency and flippancy in the world.”

True, O critic! Most profoundly and most pitifully true. What man who passes his life in action ever attains to a correct and elegant style? Once in a cycle we may have a Julius Cæsar to challenge the theory implied in this question; but the greatness of such an exception simply strengthens the theory

and raises it into a rule. And no one—to cite once more the utterance of that clerical wit whose name appears in the first line or two of this paper—has such a pedantic love of good writing, “as to prefer mendacious finery to rough and ungrammatical truth.”

Of course there are two significations to that one word, “writing.” There is the simple act of penmanship, and there is the more or less metaphorically named work of the brain and the hand in conjunction; a man’s “writings” generally standing for his “thinkings,” it being of no importance whether they were actually produced by his own manual labours or, like Milton’s poems and a great part of “Waverley,” by the services of an amanuensis. There is, in fact, the actual caligraphy, or fair and elegant manuscript, which a writing-master would approve; and there is the wisdom, wit, or fancy which we praise by the name of “writing,” albeit the sorriest scrawl that ever puzzled a printer. Six lessons might suffice to make Molly the kitchen-maid a far better *writer*, in the material sense of the term, than Walter Savage Landor, who was sometimes unable to read his own compositions in the MS.

M. Lanfant de Metz has made a very charming picture of a rudimentary writing lesson. As a Homely Scene it is as poetically real as could be desired by any lover of poetical reality. There are indeed few painters more truthful in trifles, or more consistent and imaginative in putting those trifles together, than M. de Metz. If any person who looks at this natural representation has ever guided a very little child’s hand on a sheet of paper or a copy-book, his or her experience can hardly fail to induce admiration for the artist’s humorous adherence to fact. The impossibility of getting the small fingers, at once stubborn and provokingly yielding—like some plastic material which has a vicious elasticity—into proper position, is capitally suggested here. The baby-hand quite crumples up within the patient, painstaking palm of the young teacher, whose whole attitude and expression, from her careful face to her firmly planted feet, are full of life and purpose. We are too apt to undervalue—it would be harder far to overvalue—the good which is in such pictures. They have the quality and the uses of lyrical poems, not narrative, not descriptive, not didactic, but turning on some single thought, feeling, or situation. And when at any distant time that thought, feeling, or situation occurs to us in actual life, the *song*, no matter in

what shape, whether melodious verse or picture, comes across our memory precisely because it was so real, so true. Thus we "sweeten solitude," as Mr. Francis Turner Palgrave wisely and gracefully says, in the fit dedication of his "Golden Treasury" to Alfred Tennyson, "with the beauty which the eye cannot see, and the music only heard in silence."

THE LITTLE DUCKS



HONOURED in Dusseldorf, and all through Germany, and indeed wherever German art is welcome, is the name of Dieffenbach, the painter of the healthy piece of country life which we are now passing over. You seem to breathe the air of this picture, with a sense of its freshness and a delight in its fragrance; though the scene indeed is only a bit of farm-land, with signs of the homestead near at hand, a broken view of straggling fields and unclipped hedges beyond, and a duck-pond in the foreground, with an anxious old hen clucking to her amphibious brood, not one of whom pays her the least deference or attention. The Tempter—a curly-headed, chubby-faced, plump-limbed cottage-boy—beguiles them with crumbs of his Butterbrod, dropped into the pond; so there they stay, pleasantly indifferent to the distress of their fluttered parent on the brink.

A hen-hatched duckling is like an inland-born lad who *will* go to sea; and it is astonishing how many such lads there are in the heart of England; their thoughts and inclinations running down to the ocean like the streams of their native hills and vales. But there are other inclinations in youth which the wisest parents are puzzled to govern, to guide, or to check. All boys don't want to go to sea, but all boys have a bias of one kind or another. And all girls too? Possibly; though it is obvious that they are not exposed to the same daily temptations and dangers, and that, as a general rule, the problem of government, direction, and restraint is simpler in their case than in the case of our sons. *Their* first dawning of manly independence may be looked for very early in life; and perhaps the philosopher was right who said the greatest object in education is to accustom a young man gradually to be his own master. Very few young men have the power of resistance, of negation, very strongly framed at first.



It may be expected to increase as confidence increases, and under the teaching of ordinary experience, and the discovery of inconveniences which result from the want of firmness in denial. That boys cannot learn the ways of men without seeing the vices of men, and listening to much evil talk, is so inevitable a fact that there is no use in lamenting it. To such risk, and to such certain injury, every boy who goes into the world must be exposed; and if you attempt to preserve him from danger by holding him back, or hiding the danger from his eyes, you quite unfit him for the toils and struggles of life. Ah, true! This has been said again and again; and if it had the unqualified effect of persuading us out of all anxiety concerning our boys, it had far better not have been said at all. The truth is, however, that we shall continue to theorise in the same way, and to act in a way by no means strictly consonant with our theory, as long as the world is what the world has always been.

THE OLD, OLD STORY.



ANOTHER of Frank Stone's love-scenes this, and one of his best pictures, for composition, treatment, well-balanced light and shade, and all pictorial requirements. It was painted at a later time than "The First Appeal." He had studied Normandy life rather assiduously in the latter part of his career, and this is one of the prettiest of his Pas de Calais reminiscences. The girl's face is charmingly simple—such a face as Leslie might have painted—nay, did paint. She listens to the ever new "Old, Old Story," as maidens listened when it was told them, precisely after the same school of rhetoric, in the Golden Age. The earliest school of philosophy was Love's ; and Shelley's exposition of its doctrines is but an echo such as, by the grace of poetry, will "roll from soul to soul, and grow for ever and for ever." The key-note of this music was sounded when Time himself was young.

"The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion ;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things, by a law Divine,
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine ?

"See the mountains kiss high heaven,
And the waves clasp one another ;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother ;
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea—
What are all these kissings worth
If thou kiss not me ?"



To this same argument it is that every fair maid, gentle or simple, heiress or peasant, gives ear, whatever be the language in which it is urged. Worldly prudence may preach with ceaseless pertinacity on the other side, but its hearers will not be among the young, who are just the audience it should catch, or where is the use of its catching any?

A pretty peasant dress is that of the Normandy girl; and he who painted the picture, and we who look at it, would hardly have been as well satisfied with the same beauty in less piquant attire. But it is not from the artistic point of view that the young fisherman regards the buxom little body bending down her head to catch his words. The most unbecoming costume that ever had its day with the milliners and the *haut ton* never disguised a pretty girl in the eyes of her lover. It is perfectly marvellous how any love-making could possibly have gone on in the hideously tasteless days of feminine disfigurement that lasted, in one preposterous form or another, through the two reigns which preceded the accession of Queen Victoria. The fashion-books of that long, inartistic period are funnier now than any of the intentional caricatures. The short waists, the leg-of-mutton sleeves, the ingenious ugliness of the coiffure, the combs like tortoise-shell shovels, the long filagree drops hanging from the ear-rings, the tall feathers sticking bolt upright on the top of the head, as if it were a shuttle-cock—these and other devices for modifying female fascination, not all cotemporaneous, perhaps, but following one another pretty closely, were found acceptable by our grandmothers, and do not seem to have daunted our grandfathers. The world, especially the world of fashion, is not so much wiser in matters of outward beauty that we need either felicitate ourselves on being born so late, or regret that we were not reserved for a time which will be that of our grandchildren.

THE GOOD GIRL.

WHATEVER merits may have been displayed by M. Lobrichon's jolly-looking little woman, it would seem that they have been duly rewarded. Not all good girls—few even of the best in her station of life, which we take to be the station of small *bourgeoisie*—are used to being petted without being spoiled. Too many, alas! are spoiled without being petted.

One of the authors of "Guesses at Truth" has made rather more than a guess at the true principle of rewarding children. All that he says on the subject is wisely practical, but especially worth heed is his recommendation that a studious boy should be rewarded with a cricket bat, ball, and set of stumps; and that an otherwise deserving lad, whose inclinations are rather towards play than school-work, should be rewarded with a book. Now, when we speak of boys we speak collaterally of girls; and we say, looking at this girl, good as she is supposed to be (and looks), that so plump and apparently "well-nurtured" a young person—one so decidedly constituted by nature to appreciate the pleasures of that part of a good life which consists in good living—might be advantageously made the object of other gifts than "creature comforts."

For she is one of the soft easy natures that Brillat-Savarin describes. Her turn is for tasting. She is a bud of gastronomic promise, and may bloom into a cuisinière—a cordon-bleu. But she wants no forcing; rather should she be judiciously held back, till of age to profit by culture.

This is a little French girl; for which reason it is, indeed, that we venture to predict for her a delightfully useful career in the art of preparing for others the food she naturally knows how to enjoy. But French or English, Peruvian or Chinese, it is a pity to see any little girl, good though she may be, feasting all alone



“withouten any companie.” *That* is not good for one so young. Be our pleasures of the grosser sense humble or luxurious, they should never be solitary. People who love to eat alone are less likely to taste than to gobble. That way gluttony lies. You cannot too soon teach the young idea to shun that.

To own the truth, this Homely Scene of clever M. Lobrichon’s imagination somewhat puzzles while it pleases us. Why does the good girl—and good she looks, as well as plump and pretty—sit there all by herself, smirking and smiling, between the first and second bites of her dainty morsel? How comes she in possession of basket and bottle and bunch of grapes? Wherefore has she brought her chair into that strangely inconvenient place, to regale herself in so odd a manner? No doubt, she makes a tolerable tableau with her little body and those comfortable accessories; but when we have got so much pleasure out of the first glance as the first glance will afford, it is but justice to the picture itself that we should wish to understand it more nearly. Is she the messenger of glad tidings, who has been rewarded at the portal? By the bundle of letters stuffed in cheek by jowl with that unintelligible flask, it might appear that she is the village letter-carrier, in which case she is anything but a good girl to loiter on her rounds. We had best give up the riddle, and admit her goodness, by default of any contradictory evidence. Ah, why should that not be the universal rule—everybody to be accounted good, no witness gainsaying? All stories to be received as true, no negative statement being plainly more worthy credence? All things to be acknowledged according to their seeming, unless proved spurious? Public credit would hardly suffer by an arrangement for taking good girls and good boys, good wine and good bread, good weaving, good building, and good life and work of all degrees and kinds, generally for granted.

BED-TIME.



ANOTHER piece of Mr. Frith's handiwork makes up the number of our "Homely Scenes." It is one of the homeliest, and it is at the same time one of the most generally interesting in its association of home ideas. The picture was exhibited some eighteen or twenty years ago at the Royal Academy, and, unless our memory is treacherous, at the same time with the painter's illustration of an apocryphal or at least dubious passage in the life of Pope—his avowal of love to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Very different were the two themes; very much more actual was the treatment of one than of the other. It is with no disrespect to Mr. Frith that we speak of his having been a little out of his depth in that highly imaginative picture of Pope sitting in an attitude of impotent rage, gnawing his nails, and glaring forward at vacancy, as an actor in the same scene would glare at the pit, the while Lady Mary holds her side and laughs as a lady ought not to laugh, even when the vainest of poets tells his tale of love. We have not the least doubt, even assuming it to be true that Pope declared his passion for Lady Wortley Montagu, and was repulsed with ridicule, that Mr. Frith's conception of the scene was erroneous. Pope would have resented the affront, of course—did indeed resent an affront of some sort, real or imaginary—but not exactly by outward and visible stage-trick. He would have thought over it; just have nibbled the feather of his pen, perchance, before dipping the point in gall-extract; and have spared his finger-ends.

Pope's quarrels would make a long parenthesis here; and his peculiar savagery in warring upon women, is a theme that might extend the parenthesis into a dissertation. Iago himself was gentler with the gentle sex than he who wrote of *Silia* and *Narcissa*, of *Philomedé* and *Flavia* and *Atossa*, the venom of his satire



overflowing into his very praise. De Quincey, though emphatically opposed to the common belief that Pope was a woman-hater, scourges the Mahometanism of the "prurient little bard"—as Mr. Hannay has felicitously called him—who denied characters (that is, souls) to women. "There is no truth in Pope's satiric sketches of women—not even colourable truth; but if there were, how frivolous, how hollow, to erect into solemn monumental protestations against the whole female sex what, if examined, turn out to be pure casual eccentricities, or else personal idiosyncrasies, or else foibles shockingly caricatured, but, above all, to be such foibles as could not have connected themselves with *sincere* feelings of indignation in any rational mind." That mysterious personage, the "Unfortunate Lady," to whose memory Pope wrote the famous "Elegy," is supposed by Warton to have been deformed, a curious circumstance if looked at in the light of Pope's extraordinary and sympathetic tenderness. In the expression of his true warmth of heart, Pope's very style is sincere. His fury was worked up till he himself, perhaps, hardly knew how much of it was genuine. That he was likely to demonstrate his wrathful feelings in the fashion pictorially imagined by Mr. Frith, is about the most preposterous misprision of personal character ever put on lasting record.

At home, in every sense of the phrase, was Mr. Frith in his second picture here presented. The portraits are those of the then young artist's wife and little child. That they are excellent likenesses any one may guess who has an eye for character, and who knows how very much easier it is for an even moderately able limner to go right than to go wrong, when he has his living subject before him.

It is curious to note how exceedingly prone the least imaginative persons are to impute an excess of imagination to those whose business it is to describe facts. One might suppose that, from their own self-knowledge, they would naturally incline to the opposite belief, and when a work of imaginative art, whether pictorial or literary, is placed before them, would suspect that its author has made a direct non-ideal transfer of living experience or observation. This they never do. If the most feasible occurrence be described with a natural touch of humour or pathos, say in the columns of a newspaper, or wherever you might expect to meet with a plain, unvarnished tale, "Oh," says the unimaginative reader, "that is all imaginary."

Why? Is the incident incredible? No; he does not say that. Is it at all unlikely? No; he does not say that, either. Would it be easier to invent such an incident than to see it and speak of it exactly as it was seen? This is a question that would hardly occur to your unimaginative man, who never invented anything himself, and is therefore not called on to imagine, if he could imagine, the difficulty of imagination.

Everything is, however, so very real, simple, direct, and, in a word, homely in this picture, that there does not seem to be the bare possibility of mistaking it for an ideal composition. There is positively nothing ideal about it. And yet, real as it is, from the quiet earnestness of affection in the mother's face down to the smallest incident of nursery-life, it is free from that vulgarity of sentimentalism which delights in obtrusively common-place representations of domesticity. It is, indeed, a very natural, unaffected, and therefore charming picture; cheerful and grave at once, in its twilight composure, like a simple evening hymn. So let it stand the last in a book which we would wish to be closed at the close of day, with no jarring sense of anything greatly amiss in the hours of labour and diversion that are ended.

"To all and each a fair good night,
And pleasant dreams, and slumbers light."

THE END.

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